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TALES OF A MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER

by

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Most field workers can look back on some past expedition and bewail their failure to investigate some important phase of their subject. One that had plagued me arose from my not collecting folktales while I was in Mississippi for over a month in the spring of 1939 on an intensive folksong recording expedition. At the time my interest in the folktale was slight, and my knowledge less. Several years later, as my interest increased, it was a gnawing irritation to look back on the golden opportunity that I had missed.

The war has afforded me the chance to make partial amends for my omission. At an Army Air Forces base in Canada where I was stationed last fall, I met Corporal Thomas W. Newell, aged 29, of Richton, Perry County, Mississippi. Corporal Newell, then a private, was acting first cook at the Station Mess, and a good one, too. He admitted that in his younger days he had heard tales, but, like most storytellers, at first he disclaimed any present interest in them and professed his inability to recall any. I made it a practice to drop in for an occasional cup of coffee and a chat, and after a while, nearly always one or two tales would be forthcoming.

He was very patient about dictating them to me. After the first couple of sessions I asked if it bothered him to dictate the stories. He answered: "No, not much. When I tell it, I try to tell it in the way that would be easiest to write." I promptly exclaimed that I wanted the story told as nearly as possible the way he would tell it to an audience. As a result, the later stories he gave in much more detail and with little touches he probably has used for a larger audience.

Newell is nearly six feet tall but gives the impression of being of medium height and build. He is dark, and generally sober-faced, but with a slow grin that widens to a broad delighted smile when he gets amused. He talks slowly but without hesitation. When telling

a story, he keeps a straight face and an earnest air with eyes concentrated on the listener until the last sentence when amusement overtakes him, and he hurries the end. Then he either watches quietly and intently for the effect of the story, or breaks into laughter and chooses that point to leave the room to go back to work.

To inquire about the setting in which stories are learned seems to me an important part of the collector's job. In this way we can gain insights into the part folklore plays in the lives of those who perpetuate it. Corporal Newell's answers give a background for his tales that helps us see them as part of a way of life and not just as local variants of widely known tales.

"Oh, I've heard stories from the time I was a small kid, somethin' like seven or eight years old, up until now. I haven't heard any of them in a good while." The latter remark, as most folklorists will recognize, is a stock one that many informants use, apparently as a formalized apology to prepare the hearer for possible shortcomings in the performance to follow.

"I was borned and reared up in Perry County, Mississippi. My father's name was Jesse Reuben Newell. He's a road constructor, and a locomotive engineer. I don't believe he ever told a story about anything in his life; probably he told some stories, but not intentionally. I had several uncles who was bad to tell stories. I hunted and fished with them lots; done our hunting in the swamps — river swamps. They told those stories different times: when we were killin' time settin' waitin' to go hunting. Probably we'd be through hunting, waiting for people to pick us up some place. That was from the time I was small till I left home to come in the Army; practically all the time I've been with 'em, off and on."

After another storytelling session I again asked Newell when these stories were told. He replied: "Only one time when I like to hear these yarns when I'm waitin' on someone some place I can't move — to pass the time away.

"Most of those I heard when I was real small — fifteen, along that way. That was in Mississippi. I was workin'. Durin' the noon hours and Sundays when I wasn't workin' — just passin' off the time some place — didn't have anything to do and nowhere to go. I've heard them off and on. All those stories was told mostly for young guys that might believe 'em. (See the narrator's comment to "The Strong Man.")

"Usually always probably you can tell 'em to children if you want

'em to do somethin'. You know kids like stories, and then you can tell 'em stories and win their good will and they'll do anything for you. You win their friendship that way." Then without realizing that he was contradicting his earlier remark about not having heard stories for some time, he continued: "I heard stories from different guys in the Army. I heard some up on Alaska Highway when we stopped over to take a rest. We were on convoy, carryin' equipment."

I asked Newell what jobs he had worked at. "Sort of work? Well sir, when I was eleven years old I started firin' a gravel loader. I stayed with that different times — I wasn't steady at it — up until I was sixteen. Then I took a job when I was sixteen, oilin' on a ditching machine for a natural gas company. Worked probably six or eight months. So I went back to firin' on a old Erie steam shovel. I stayed with that job till the company changed. Then I started firin' an engine — locomotive. So I stayed with that a year. They started pumpin' their gravel — and washin' it, so I started pumpin' gravel — operatin' the pump. Then I got so I didn't have no special job on the job: I done electrical work, was classed as a grade operator, and also fireman. I was just an extra man. Between jobs back there I was runnin' off different places, workin' different companies. I was overhead skidder one time out of Orlando, Florida, for a lumber company. Always go back to the gravel company to work. My cookin'? — well I started livin' with my grandparents — they were both old. I'd get up in the mornin' and do the cookin'. Run a cafe of my own — went broke. I cooked in the Army six or eight months."

To get information on the storyteller's attitude towards tall stories, I asked: "Were the stories true?" He retorted: "Well it's true that I *heard* the stories. Some of 'em sound reasonable, and some of them don't."

I got closer to this attitude from my informant's comment on story no. 4: "This really didn't happen but I want to tell it on myself. It makes it more real." And a similar approach was evident in his remarks about story no. 5: "My uncle . . . told it on hisself and so I tell it on myself. In other words it ain't good unless a fellow tells it on himself."

Here was an artistic device which the storyteller adopted consciously. Another, that of improvisation, was also conscious. On one occasion when Newell retold story no. 2 to a small audience, he gave it in much more detail than in the variant I present. He spoke of stirring up the bees, how unruly the cattle were, and so on. The

next day, when I commented to him that he had added to the story, he said: "Sometimes I can think of it the same way, sometimes I don't. It's accordin' to how I can think of it — the way it actually was — and sometimes I'll substitute."

This trick of improvising rather than giving the audience an unfinished work is one I have found with some folksingers. On a later visit the singer will have recalled the original in the way he learned it, and insist on making a correction of the first rendition. Many informants will flatly refuse to fill in a missing section because they cannot recall it "the right way". Only rarely does one find a singer or narrator who makes conscious changes. What is very common is to get assured by both singers and storytellers that they never change a word but are letter perfect each time they repeat their song or tale. Surprisingly often this is very nearly the case; more often, however, one can find considerable unconscious variation in the repetition.

Newell was conscious that he did make changes in different tellings. When I asked him to retell the story of "The Wonderful Hunt", no. 10, he replied:

"I imagine I'd get it different again. I couldn't hardly remember it just how I told it to you. Sometimes in tellin' one, instead of tellin' the way it goes I'll think of somethin' that rhymes and tell it instead."

I inquired if there was a "right way". "There's a right way to tell it some way. I guess everybody would tell it the right way their way. Every one would be different to my notion. (Why?) I would believe there was a 'riginal way the way it started.

"A guy'll hear it one time and he'll try and tell it, and he can't remember all the parts, so instead in tellin' it he'll find something else that rhymes and he'll get it in. And probably he'll tell it a different way the next time. He don't remember it, or he'll think of something else he can use that rhymes better. They make some difference somewhere — probably it'll be one word difference, but there'll always be some differences — probably some man would do it."

To note how the several renditions of this story (no. 10) differ, I give three variants of it. The narrator's remark after dictating the third variant (no. 10-c) introduces still another factor that makes for variation: that a story is sometime heard from different sources. In such a case obviously several recombinations lie at hand for the

narrator's selection when relating it. For another comment by the narrator which bears on the problem of variation, see that to story no. 9.

1. THE STRONG MAN¹

I heard a feller tell about how strong he was. This was in my home state—in Mississippi. He was workin' around the pile driver, the hammer slipped and he seen it was goin' to fall on a guy. He run under it and caught it. It bogged him to his knees in concrete. The hammer the man caught weighed twenty-five hundred pounds. That was solid concrete.

—This guy told this for the truth—at the time I heard it I believed it. I was a small kid. Went home tellin' about what a strong man I'd been talkin' to.

2. SWOLLEN TIMBER²

—That was a boy from the Engineers told that—from Alabama. I guess four, five months ago. He told that while he and I were on a convoy on a trip up the Alaska Highway.—

He said he and his father were hoein' potatoes up on the mountain and a bumble bee flew into his hoe handle and stung it. And they had about three hundred cattle and had no place to pen them. And after the bumble bee stung the hoe handle it swole till they decided to split it into rails to make a corral to pen the cattle in. And durin' the night the swellin' went out and the fence drawed up and choked all their cattle to death.

3. THE INTELLIGENT BIRD DOG³

This guy, Foster, said he found his bird dog holdin' his foot on a log. He thought that he had his foot hung

¹ Strong men are discussed by Louise Pound, "Nebraska Strong Men", *SOUTHERN FOLKLORE QUARTERLY*, VII, 133-43. An Indiana strong man is given by Ernest W. Baughman, "Bobby Hayes, Quarry Worker", *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin*, I (1942), 75-77. The great load which drives a man into concrete or the like is also part of the Paul Bunyan cycle. See: Esther Shephard, *Paul Bunyan* (New York, copyright 1924), p. 34; James Stevens, *Paul Bunyan* (New York, copyright 1925), p. 5. A New Jersey variant, not in the Bunyan cycle, is in the Halpert mss.

² This is a variant form of the popular tall story of the snake-bit timber which swells to unbelievable proportions. For references see the tales and notes I give in *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin*, I (1942), 18, 67. Add: James R. Masterson, *Tall Tales of Arkansas* (Boston, copyright 1943), 207, 238. For an even closer parallel see the Wisconsin text in my "Indiana Storyteller," *op. cit.*, p. 52, where the poisonous swelling of timber is sharply reduced.

³ Compare: Sgt. Bill Davidson, *Tall Tales They Tell In The Services* (New York, 1943), p. 68. For other yarns on the remarkable intelligence of dogs, see Davidson, *op. cit.*, pp. 33, 65; Lowell Thomas, *Tall Stories* (New York, 1931), pp. 12-13, 113-21.

or somethin' — he couldn't get him to move away from it. And he discovered that he had his foot over a hole in the log — was a covey of quails inside of the log. And he raised his foot up and let them out one at a time until he (the hunter) killed the whole covey.

— This was while we were stopped over beside the road. One fellow told that and the other feller told the bumble bee story. They were both from Alabama.

4. THE DURABLE WATCH ⁴

— This is one I made myself; I didn't have any ground for it. I've heard stories that kind of resembled it but not as bad. —

Well I was fishing and dropped my watch in the river. And one year afterward a boy was fishing in the same place, caught a catfish. And when he was dressin' the fish he found my watch — and it was still runnin' in good shape. When he swallowed it, it got hung in his gills and as he opened his gills and shut them, kepted the watch wound up. — I'm positive that was the way he was keepin' the watch wound up.

(A little later Newell said: "This really didn't happen, but I want to tell it on myself. It makes it more real.")

5. INSECTS AS SINGING SAILORS ⁵

Well I was walkin' out through the country and I got tired and couldn't get no rides. An' it begin to snow, so I stopped in an old country house to spend the night. Somethin' kept bitin' me an' it was pretty hard to figure out what it was. So I had a large box of matches an' I struck them till they was about all gone. An' I eventually discovered it was bedbugs. So I took my bed and put it down on the floor. An' by that time my matches were all gone. I felt around then and found a bucket of syrup, opened them up and poured the syrup all around my bed. Then I went back to sleep. I was dreamin' an' heard the prettiest music I ever heard in my life an' it kepted on till I woke. Then I discovered what it was. All those bedbugs had got together and got into the matchbox, was usin' them

⁴ Carl Sandburg mentions a watch swallowed by a cow, but still running a year later. See: *The People, Yes* (New York, 1936), p. 89. See also *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin*, I (1942), 15.

⁵ For a text and references, see: *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin*, I (1942), 16. The story was recognized by a resident of Calgary, Alberta, as one he had often heard years ago.

match-stems for paddles and was paddling 'crosst the syrup singin' "On Jerdan's stormy banks I stand."
— Anyone knows the song would know the balance of it:

And cast a wishful eye
Over there across the pond
Where my procession ⁶ lie.

In other words they were singin' like the fellow across the syrup belonged to 'em. — That happened in Canady.

— I don't remember where I heard it. It's been years ago. I disremember where I heard it. — My uncle, Cleve Hardy, told it on hisself and so I tell on myself. In other words it ain't good unless a fellow tells it on himself.

6. THE ANGELS THAT BIT

This boy was rambling around and he was broke and he happened to come into a home and it was quite a religious place. So he asked this lady could he spend the night and she said yes, she had a bed upstairs: "You can go upstairs and sleep an' the angels will watch over you." Next morning he comes down — I don't know how it comes in — 'stid of watching over him they bit him. He thought it was these angels, they bit him.

— I heard that in Arizona — some boy told that in Arizona. There was a bunch tellin' yarns. That was in a hotel; a bunch of us boys were havin' a party; tellin' different kind of yarns.

7. THE LOCUSTS AND THE CORN ⁷

Well there was a king that liked stories. So he promised the guy that could tell him one till he got tired, he promised him his daughter. Oh, there'd been lots that tried it but this was the first one with any success. That's what he started on:

"One time there was a king had all the corn in the country brought in and he stored it away. An' the locuses started gettin' his corn and carryin' it away. First there was just a few started, and soon the sky was black with 'em. Every locust go in an' get a grain, and then another one—and you just keep on writin' that till

⁶ For "possessions".

⁷ For parallels and references to this "endless tale" see: *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin*, I (1942), 33-34. Compare also *op. cit.*, p. 69 and references; add: pp. 88-89.

tomorrow⁸ — the only way you change it would be in the guy tellin' it.

— A guy can just fumble in his voice like he was fixin' to change the story and just go on sayin' the same thing over an' over. The difference would be a different kind of locust. You can say a different color and all like that. Like: 'And one old crippled one he came in and he managed to get out with two grains.' It don't have any end to it; the end of the story is the end of the king's corn, and he had lots of corn. — I don't know how it was brought in, but he give him his daughter and the boy still made like he didn't want to quit and he gave him money. — That's about all."

— My uncle, Tyra L. Newell, told me that when I was a kid. That was in Perry County, Mississippi.

8. THE ENORMOUS 'GATOR⁹

There was a guy he kept losin' his hogs and cattle. That was in No'th Ca'lina.¹⁰ He couldn't figger out where they were goin'. He checked his pasture fence and couldn't find any holes where they went out. Also checked around the woods on the outside. Never could find any of them.

So one day he happened to go down by the pond — found a 'gator. So he killed this 'gator, cut him open, found one hog that he'd just swallowed. Searched on further and found his oxens that had been lost over a year. They was fat and purty. Found them feeding on two acres of burnt woods that the 'gator had swallowed.

— I don't where I heard it. (On another occasion Newell said he had made the story up himself, modelling it on another tall story.)

9. THE SQUIRREL AND THE GIANT LOG¹¹

Was a farmer he — the varmints and things toted

⁸ The direction was given to me because I was writing busily.

⁹ Compare the giant Arkansas fish which had inside of it another large fish, "three fat hogs, one yoke of oxen and an acre of burnt woods", James R. Masterson, *Tall Tales of Arkansas* (Boston, copyright 1943), p. 70 (quoted from Marion Hughes, *Three Years in Arkansas* (Chicago, copyright 1904), p. 90). Compare also the folksong "The Crocodile."

¹⁰ "North Carolina" was said with a grin and a look over his shoulder at a man from North Carolina then in the mess hall. Both this and the remark "That happened in Canady", in story no. 5, were thrown in to give a local reference.

¹¹ See Ralph Steele Boggs, "North Carolina White Folktales and Riddles," *Journal of American Folklore*, XLVII (1934), 315, No. 47B. Compare also Joel Chandler Harris, *Uncle Remus and His Friends*, No. 21.

off all of the grain. So he was just in the middle of a bad fix: he didn't have any corn to sell — so he started out — he was gonna chase 'em some. So he got after a squirrel. So this squirrel went into a holler cypress. So he was pretty well determined to get the squirrel and he didn't have anything else to do — didn't have any money, plenty of time — so he cuts this tree down in order to kill the squirrel. And uh — he cut into the tree searchin' for the squirrel and found all of his corn stored in there; the squirrel had stored it away. And he discovered that this cypress was good board timber. And he cut it into boards and sold it; made him enough money to buy him all the stuff he needed to make a crop the next year. — He killed the squirrel; the one squirrel had done all the trouble.

— About the same story told in a different way — that 'gator story I told you and this one both comes off the same story, but I don't know how it goes. Guys has told the same story but told it different way; it's from the same original. People tells that same story in different ways. Probably a guy will forget part of it and he'll think of another story that will mix in, and he'll tell it right on the same story.

10a. THE WONDERFUL HUNT¹²

(Told on October 10, 1943)

— Most any kind of yarns or jokes or anything that's supposed to be lies they call "fairy tales". —

This guy was out huntin' and he had only one shell. So he looked — he sees a turkey settin' on a limb. So he starts to take his aim to shoot the turkey, he sees there's a deer standin' on the ground beneath the limb and before he gets to shoot he heard a racket down near his feet and it's a rattlesnake — he finds a rattlesnake there. So he don't know what to do. He thinks if he shoots the turkey the rattlesnake'll bite him and the deer'll run off. So he eventually decides to shoot the turkey and take a chance on the snake bitin' him and the deer gettin' away. So he shoots the turkey and part of the load went in the limb, knocked it off. It fell on the deer and killed him. And the lock fell off his gun and killed the rattlesnake. That's how lucky he was — his name didn't happen to be Tom Newell.

¹² For variants and full lists of references to the "Wonderful Hunt", see: *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin*, I (1942), 20-21, 41-42, 53-54; Richard M. Dorson, "Jonathan Draws the Long Bow", *New England Quarterly*, XVI (1943), 253-59.

10b. THE WONDERFUL HUNT
(Told on November 21, 1943)

This guy was huntin' and the gun he used was one of these muzzle loaders — you have to put your powder in, then your wad in, and then your shot. All right. He had plenty of powder, and he only had enough lead to load one time. So he looked and he could see a turkey settin' up on a limb. So he loaded his gun with this last load; then he looked back — beneath the limb stood a deer. Heard a racket down under his feet — was a rattlesnake. So he was settin' near a stream and he finally decided to shoot the turkey and take chances on the rattlesnake bitin'. So he was kinda nervous when he drew his gun. He shot a little too low. Part of his load went into the turkey, the other part went in the limb. The limb fell on the deer and killed him, ramrod fell out of the gun killed the rattlesnake. The gun kicked him backwards into the stream and when he came up he had his shirt tail full of fish. So he carried home deer, turkey and fish.

10c. THE WONDERFUL HUNT
(Told on November 21, 1943)

Some tells it that quails was on the limb and the bullet — he shot a rifle — the bullet splits the limb — and the line o' quails settin' on the limb, and their toes falls down in the split and it closes up on them before they get away. The bullet goes on through and kills the deer; the barrel of the gun busted. One piece went one way, and one the other, and killed the turkey on each side of him, and the ramrod drops down and kills the rattlesnake — and the gun kicks him back in the water and he comes up with his shirt tail full o' fish.

— That makes about four different ways I believe I've told that story. I've heard different ones tell it. I believe I like it the best the last way I told it. In other words he gets more game, he does more.

11. RAMROD SHOT¹³

That's about the guy loadin' his gun with a ramrod. — That's not much of a story; it's very short — shootin' it thru the ducks, stringin' 'em up and carryin' 'em home on the ramrod. That's all.

¹³ This fragmentary yarn is, of course, one of Munchausen's. There are some references to tales with this motif in the notes to the previous story. There is a version in Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

12. THE IRISHMAN AND THE TRICK ¹⁴

Well, this Irishman was travelin' around the country to see what he could see and learn. So he met a Frenchman. This Frenchman, full of jokes, he decided to have some fun, so he laid his hand on a stump and told the Irishman to hit it. So this Irishman goes to hit it and the Frenchman jerks his hand and he hits the stump. So the Irishman goes on and decides to try it on the next man. So he meets a guy, looks around and can't find no stump, so he puts his hand on his face and tells him to hit his hand. This man goes to hit it, he jerks his hand, and this man busted his nose.

— Probably heard it at home.

13. WHAT DID PAUL SAY ¹⁵

This guy couldn't preach unless he was full o' booze so he had a boy — a little guy who he knew — to git him a pint of whiskey. And uh — this guy's name was Paul. So the little boy come back an' this preacher was up preachin' — about the apostle Paul. An' about the time this little boy walked in he says, "And what did Paul say?" An' this little boy took it for granted that he was talkin' to him and he answered him, "He said if you didn't pay him for what you'd already got, he wouldn't let you have another damn drop!"

— That's all.

14. YOU TAKE THIS ONE ¹⁶

There was two Negroes been off gatherin' nuts. So they was huntin' a place to divide them where they could find a shade. So they went into a graveyard. So they was sitting in there counting the hickory nuts and the only way they knew to count was to give one and take one. So one dropped and rolled on the outside of the fence while they were counting. And that happened to be about the last. So the one that was dividin' them he took himself one and told his partner that he could

¹⁴ See: F. W. Waugh, "Canadian Folk-Lore from Ontario", *Journal of American Folklore*, XXXI (1918), 79. A text from New Jersey is in the Halpert mss.

¹⁵ For texts and references, see Ralph Steele Boggs, "North Carolina White Folktales and Riddles," *Journal of American Folklore*, XLVII (1934), 314. See also *A Hundred Mery Talys*, Tale No. 50, in W. Carew Hazlitt, *Shakespeare's Jest Books* (London, 1864).

¹⁶ See Boggs, *op. cit.*, pp. 311-12, for texts and references to this well known type. Add: *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin*, I (1942), 25, 56-57, 88.

have the one on the outside. In the meantime there was a boy passin' the graveyard. He heard: "Me one and you one; I take this one and you the one on the outside." This feller that was passin' along he couldn't see any-one so he run on home and told that the Lord and the Devil were dividin' their people up there. — That's about all of it.

— I've known that a good long time. I would say I heard it in Mississippi.

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HAS AMERICAN FOLKLORE A SPECIAL QUALITY?¹

by

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I

The justification for American folklore studies is found in the recovery and preservation of genuine native materials, whether they come from documents or from oral repetition. In time, the body of such material may be viewed with perspective and a valuable insight gained on the American heritage. But what does this term folklore include, and has it for the United States any special quality? What distinguishes folklore, for example, from anthropology, ethnology, sociology, or even from literature, dialect studies, or mere antiquarianism? These more formal studies are concerned with aspects of human society, past and present, and with human culture, institutions, customs, patterns of living and thinking. Folklore study obviously contributes to the same fields. Wherein, then, lies a difference?

Folklore investigation, as it is generally pursued, appears to lay less claim to being an academic study or an organized science. Anthropology, ethnology and sociology aim, with more or less success, at being sciences; that is, systematized analysis, synthesis and generalization, pursued with quantitative techniques. But folklore seems content, for the most part, with less comprehensive ambitions, and also exhibits something akin to esthetic enjoyment in its field. The folklorist is often nearer to the artist or the poet than to the scientist. He savors the folk tale, the folk myth, the folk song, the folk way, for its own sake, and pauses to find it quaint or amusing, personally attractive, or endowed with the charm of simple art. Such an approach is esthetic rather than scientific, and aims at sympathetic understanding as much as at factual knowledge. This comment seems particularly applicable to western folklore matter, which has often emerged so recently as to be a part of the memory or near-memory of its liveliest exponents, or which stirs a feeling akin to nostalgia in its followers.

It is not necessary to belabor a distinction perhaps largely verbal. The "sciences" mentioned above, borderline sciences, perhaps — and we may add psychology — have also experienced difficulty in applying quantitative techniques because they, too, deal with human materials, and so encounter their share of emotive, subjective judg-

¹ Based on a paper read at the Western Folklore Conference in Denver, 1943.

ments. The folklorist, however, rarely advances a claim of the elimination of the personal, the emotive, the esthetic factors. Nor is there any reason why he should do so; for he serves a scientific aim while amassing his lore, and a social aim while enlarging the horizons of understanding of his native land.

Thus we may see two possible approaches to folklore. On the one hand, it may be defined as the conscientious gathering of folk beliefs, customs, traditions, myths, legends, songs, superstitions, and folk ways, in the hope of arriving some day at a composite and scientific picture of the human mind, or a given area of it. Such scientific claims have been made; and an European folklorist has argued that a complete understanding of the gradual development of the human mind is possible only by a study of the superstitions and mythologies, the folk knowledge and folk wisdom, of peoples. This is to enter the field of anthropology. On the other hand, we may gather these same tales, songs, legends, sayings, as stimuli to native arts, such as music, painting or literature; and also as a means of deepening our feeling for our native land, our understanding of its past and of our neighbors, our character, and, *in extenso*, the character of others as well. Either definition is legitimate, nor is there any hard line of demarcation.

Thus when Webster's Dictionary is found to define folklore as "the science which investigates the life and spirit of a people as revealed in its lore," we observe the two approaches. Folklore is thus scientific and esthetic, and deals not only with the factual and the measurable but also with the imponderables.

It is this second approach, for example, which justified Professor L. J. Davidson's foreword of aims for the Western Folklore Conference in Denver in 1943. He said: "Both democracy and folklore rest upon faith in the worth of the contributions to world civilization of common men and women—the people. A knowledge of folklore strengthens one's faith in the originality and the adaptability of humanity." Here American folklore study is given a link with American faith in democracy, a link not at all implicit by necessity in a purely scientific definition of folklore aims. This is a value assertion, an essentially romantic and humanitarian one. From folklore study, it says, we renew our faith in the basic human material from which we all spring, and discover therein a basic soundness that gives us encouragement. This is a recognizably American and democratic interpretation; and it suggests some special quality in American folklore study.

Another element confronts all students of folklore — the catholicity of content. All kinds of contributions are welcomed: early ballads, tall tales, frontier songs and sayings, humor, proverbs, riddles, dances, weather-wisdom, religious habits and forms, place-name studies, dialect recordings, almost anything that has its roots in the soil of folk living. The thing that holds them all together is the element of spontaneous, unstudied, natural origin. Like some radio programs, the datum of folklore is spontaneous and unrehearsed. Material gathered by folklore studies almost uniformly possesses this quality of spontaneity, of unpremeditated, unselfconscious origin. It comes from folk who had no thought of possible scholarly investigation; who offered no criticism beyond that of immediate satisfaction in the product, and of a natural incorporation of the product into the pattern of their living. Somehow this artless expression of folk imagination must be behind anything that is labelled folklore.

Thus, if we know that a given tale is deliberately concocted by a trained writer, we do not accept it as folklore. A premeditated use of folklore might well enhance the appeal of the tale, but that would not make of it a folklore contribution. It might, of course, become in time folklore by a later anonymity, especially by oral circulation among the common people, with their own revising and simplifying touch. S. V. Benet, for example, created in "The Devil and Daniel Webster" a superb tale of convincing folklore quality. Such a tale might conceivably be read at a folklore conference as a literary contribution appropriate to the interests of the audience. Yet a moment's reflection will show that though each might applaud it, none would mistake it for true folklore. The difference is instructive.

II

True folklore has about it something of the myth. It is indigenous, of obscure origin, and of unknown author or authors. And here we come closer to our initial question as to the nature of American folklore. For we have almost no true myth, in the stricter sense in America — myths whose matter is uncritically supernatural and whose origins are lost in some dim antiquity of animism, polytheism, or primitivism. Apart from some Indian mythology, which we have not made our own, American folklore tends to center about more recent and more realistic material. There is some modification of European balladry, especially English; and there is some native, and some modified European or African superstition. But in general

it may fairly be said that American folklore has about it a kind of homely realism, founded not on prehistoric myth, but on actual folk doings and folk sayings, of recognizable historical origin. One has but to think of Oriental or ancient Greek myth, or even of Scandinavian or Teutonic myth, to observe the contrast.

In America, there tends to be a kind of humorous disbelief in mythology. Our own myths are mock-heroic and mock mythical, products of native gusto and exaggeration for the inventive pleasure of exaggeration, but not for belief. These pseudo-myths are not for mystical reassurance nor for serious cosmology. Our culture is too recent and too realistic, probably, ever to develop anything comparable to a mythology like that of a primitive, non-critical past. Our legends are of human beings blown to extravagant proportions, not of gods of supernatural credence. They originate from our native men, such as Crockett and Boone, Indian fighters and river men, men of physical action on plain or in forest, as befits a country with a long pioneer history.

R. M. Dorson commented interestingly on these figures in the *American Scholar* for October, 1941. They are, he says, America's contribution to the folk hero. But they spring from a land too new to have long folk annals or a distant heroic age. Thus they are a combination of grotesque and gigantic, burlesque and superman, joker and superhuman worker, braggart and hero. Paul Bunyan, says Dorson, first appeared in print around 1914, and in book form only in 1924; though such tales may have been spread by oral tradition for years, or disseminated by those whom folklorists call "active tradition carriers." Mr. Dorson contends that it is impossible, in the long run, to force such figures on the public by purely literary means; and he cites the failure of several synthetic creations. Their celebration in the twentieth century is an unexplained phenomenon, mock serious, mock burlesque, and made more so by the infantile exaggerations of the comic strips. Thus our myths remain more humor than myth, more play than folk seriousness.

Why are such legends rarely taken seriously and yet given widespread circulation? How much is folklore and how much is synthetic entertainment? They appeal to something genuinely American, yet they originate in play, not in belief. Perhaps that in itself is American. Perhaps we modern men and women are products of a combination of utilitarianism, practicality, and a residue of Puritan suspicion of lighter invention, such as makes us view this revival of an ancient human tendency to myth with amused tolerance. Our

Puritan elders were wont to frown upon levity, and even upon the pretence of taking fairy tales seriously. Legends, superstitions, myths, especially such as had no justification in the light of a Biblical literalism, were classed as frivolous or false. Add to this seriousness the divorce of our people from the European inheritance and its more static environment, and we see that this was not precisely the soil for a native mythology. Furthermore, we are increasingly the children of a scientific age, and are not likely to return to the myth mentality unless prolonged wars should push humanity once more to the brink of primitivism.

At any rate, American folklore continues by and large to underline a simpler realism; nor can this be a subject for regret in the face of the pressures to reduce mankind to confusion and blind acquiescence in a kind of brutal political mythology. Our folklore is the more democratic, the more human, the more valuable, for the absence of the naively supernatural. Our bards may be, like Whitman, of the transcendental sort, but they still reflect the greater realism of our native scene.

A serious folklore study, then, will record faithfully and accurately what it finds, as it is found, with detachment, and without the imposition of sentimental readings or nostalgic distortions. Sympathy will, of course, be present, but not a laying aside of mature judgment or reflection. Thus folklore, like the best science and the best art, will combine realism and creative imagination. Folklore as a science implies a kind of sophisticated objectivity, and as an esthetic a warm interest in the lore of our own land. Serious folklore study can be handicapped by a few who carry a natural attachment to the past to a sentimental excess, or who romanticize disproportionately over the "good old days." But this does no great harm so long as the documents collected are not tampered with. Nor is the folklorist aided by the bogus paragraphs of many newspapers purporting to record banal legends of ground hog day, or the rabbit's foot, or the number thirteen; all with a sort of patronizing leer, as who should say, "Of course, it's fake stuff, but the silly folk expect it, and we humor them." There are a few, too, who strain overmuch after pseudo-mysticism and folk tales of the supernatural sort.

III

There is something eminently healthy in the late Constance Rourke's defense of our native material in her *Roots of American Culture*. She concluded from her explorations that we have our own

arts, our architecture, crafts, music, theatre, painting, literature, folklore; and she gave a vigorous challenge to the persistent idea that our culture was but transplanted European culture, without validity unless we might recover what was lost in transfer. That day is long past, she insisted; such wistful turning toward the East is outmoded. What we possess is no longer within reach of the European past, for our culture early and permanently diverged from Europe, and not for the worse. Ballads appeared early in America, based on American incident and colored by American experience. The same was true of story-telling. American types appeared early, created by and on the frontier. For example, there soon appeared the Yankee provincial, shrewd, dryly humorous, mechanically ingenious, swapping, whittling, observant, able to shift for himself. The Indian, she believed, influenced the American from a very early date to differentiate him from the European; perhaps the Indian played a part in the Salem witchcraft mentality, perhaps contributed to what she labelled "cumulative folk obsessions;" perhaps he entered into our oratory and even into American revivalism and religious psychology, in themselves a little explored area of American folklore.

The frontier was, it is true, through much moving, through fire and fighting, the cause of a scattering and a diminishing of much European inheritance; but it is equally true, thought Miss Rourke, that "the constructive effect upon the cultural forces actually planted here has been neglected. . . . Strange horizons, a totally unknown continent, extreme in climate — these created a vigorous and electric medium within which all experience was shaped and colored."² Not all was disintegration on the frontier; there was also the birth of new forms; and American living took on new directions of its own, indigenous, vigorous, creative.

The folklorist will find, therefore, a body of material in the factual records of our past, written and oral. It is curious how faithfully oral tradition may preserve the past. Most of us have known examples of oral tradition, especially on the Atlantic coast, which has continued for two centuries or more before it found written expression and perhaps corroboration by historians. Such a tradition may actually be more reliable than some poorly informed or mediocre contemporary document. The folklorist listens to the memories of the old with caution, but not with contempt. Then there are the simple narratives of the untutored, artless and unliterary, but redo-

² Constance Rourke, *Roots of American Culture* (New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1942) pp. 54 f.

lent of sincerity and homely fact. Philips D. Carleton called attention, for example, to the first-hand records of Indian captivity in his article in *American Literature*, May, 1943. Another such first-hand record was sponsored recently by Frank Dobie in a Texas series, the memories of hunting and fishing on the still remaining frontier of Eastern Texas of nearly a century ago. There are, too, the narratives prepared by some skilled writer who knows how to keep himself in the background. Such an essay was written some years ago by President Eliot of Harvard on one John Gilley, a humble man on the coast of Maine, a fisherman and farmer and pioneer on an uninhabited island off the coast; the accurate, unvarnished record of a man born in 1822, his hazards and ventures, his toil, life and death. If more records existed of these various sorts, we should know more of America's past and present.

We conclude, then, that the quality of American folklore is in large measure realistic and factual, yet humorous and often extravagant in an indigenous way. And if it is more realistic than mythological, that is natural to the democratic environment. It is too late, even if it were desirable, to return to primitive mythology, or to the matter of Troy, King Arthur, or Charlemagne. The native man in his reality is better material for our study. Our folklore is within reach and within comprehension; and it is consistent with the tradition of our frontier past, as well as with that of our native literature of Emerson, Thoreau, Lincoln, Whitman, Twain, and Robert Frost.

We accept the fact that the supernatural gives way to the natural, the mythical to the actual, the credulous to the humorous and the mock-heroic. The romance of American folklore centers about the recreation of the past as it was, the understanding recovery of what once existed and what once underlay what we now know. In place of the mythological, we have the perhaps romantic and democratic faith in the common man, his courage and his common sense and his humor as it rises from the record of his exploits on a hard frontier. In that hard task he created his own brand of folklore and folk ways. If the work of collecting such records of our own past is done with accuracy and understanding, it will find its justification in due time in a truer history, one consistent with the American story of the rise of the common man, and in a flowering of native arts, as well as in the larger values of scientific achievement and human encouragement.

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MR. DOERING'S "SONGS THE CAJUNS SING"

by

Calvin Claudel

In the December, 1943, issue of *SOUTHERN FOLKLORE QUARTERLY* appeared a collection of poems presented by Mr. J. Frederick Doering under the title, "Songs the Cajuns Sing." One or two of these songs, or rather poems, represent Louisiana folklore, but the others do not. Of course, according to the title, the author does not contend that these are necessarily folk pieces. Yet, as I shall presently point out, the term "Louisiana Acadian" means to the folklorist a definite folk group. While I have no expert acquaintance with the field of Louisiana folksongs, I am nevertheless familiar with Louisiana-French dialect, since I am a native of that state and speak the language.

Aside from any criticism of Mr. Doering's method of presenting his article, I wish to say that I enjoyed his article in March, 1943, issue of *Southern Literary Messenger*, "Negro Folk-Songs from Louisiana," in which he displays poetic feeling and understanding of Negro culture in the South. All of the other statements he makes about the urgent necessity of collecting its folklore are both sound and true.

However, in his treatment of the Cajun songs he makes a serious error in changing some of the "garbled" texts of his songs. If he had translated his text into clear French, or even into English, and presented along with them the originals unchanged, then I would have no quarrel with him; but he says:

As in the case of the other French songs in this collection, most of which were badly garbled aside from dialect peculiarities, much of the original orthography, verbal form and syntax has been retained. Some textual emendation has been necessary to render the texts readable.

His procedure in so doing has made the texts less clear and leads one to believe that if any garbling was done, it must have been done by him. Moreover, he seems to think in terms of a "perfect" version of a song, thus failing to realize that the perfect version is the one that is faithfully collected and presented. When we notice some of the glaring syntactical errors in these doctored texts — errors that would never be committed by the folk, — we wonder whether Mr. Doering himself found the texts readable after all.

In his use of the word "Cajun," one is not sure what he means.

Whenever a Louisianian says, "Il est cadjin" or "Elle est cadjine," it is the same as saying he or she is a "hillbilly," a backward "green-horn." This name has been picked up by local color writers and used glibly, referring somewhat vaguely to the French "bayou folk" of Louisiana. The name "Cadjin" derives from *Acadien*. The Acadians in the early 17th century came from France to Acadia (now Nova Scotia), were cruelly driven away by the English around the middle of the 18th century and made to wander upon the sea. A number of these unfortunate Acadians settled in the Lafourche, Atakapas and Teche regions of Louisiana. Thus when we speak of Louisiana Acadians in folklore, we refer to a definite group whose French speech and folklore go back to the feudal days of France, quite a while before the French Revolution of 1789.

Roughly speaking, there are two other French-speaking folk groups in Louisiana—the 18th- and 19th-century settlers coming directly from France and the Negro settlers who were owned by the former. To the Negroes, French was an entirely new language. They developed a patois French, which is generally recognized as Creole.

Each of these three folk groups in a general way possesses distinctive language features. There are several specimens of Creole French from Louisiana. Fine examples of Acadian French were published in Jay K. Ditchy's book, *Les Acadiens louisianais et leur parler*.¹ Also the French language as found in J. M. Carrière's *Tales from the French Folk-Lore of Missouri*² is closely related and quite similar to Louisiana Acadian. By comparing Mr. Doering's so-called "Cajun" poems with the material in the above volumes, one will readily see that his language is far from that of the Acadians. It may be that his changes were so many that the poems have completely lost their Acadian flavor.

I shall consider each song or poem separately, attempting to show some of the errors involved in Mr. Doering's changes. Yet it is impossible for me to speculate on the texts, since I cannot be sure what is contained in the originals. In order that the reader may formulate conclusions concerning the material, I present approximate translations for those that are unmistakably folksongs. The following is a translation of the first:

¹ Jay K. Ditchy. *Les Acadiens louisianais et leur parler*. Paris, 1932.

² Joseph Médard Carrière. *Tales from the French Folk-Lore of Missouri*. Evanston and Chicago, Northwestern University, 1937.

THE SOLDIER WHO COMES BACK FROM WAR

I

"Good-day, my dear friends; is it possible
For me to lodge here? My weariness is painful.
I am a soldier from the war returning.
To see my mother, I've been a long time walking."
"No, no, we cannot at all put you up.
We live, you see, in this wretched hut,
Which barely keeps our little family.

II

"Go lodge in the village with another!"
But he refused, saying to his mother:
"If you had a son who was in distress,
Would you not have a heart full of tenderness?"
"Indeed, my dear child, you wring tears from me;
For I have my drafted son who causes all my worry.
He alone was my support and only hope.
I believe he died in pain and suffering."

III

"Calm your worry, your grief and sorrow,
For he is well and he himself tells you so.
It is you who have put me upon the earth;
Recognize that son to whom you've given birth."
"Come to me, my dear child, come kiss me,
Your mother, who was so cruel and hard
To refuse you a refuge that was free."

The above song is a distorted variant of "Le retour du marin soldat," a well-known Canadian folksong that originated probably in Brittany and the West Countries of France. From Anjou there is a version, "Le retour du marin," which is a humorous ballad about a seaman who returns to his wife whom he had left with three children, now finding her with four. His wife says that false reports of his death caused her to remarry. The disconsolate seaman empties a glass of wine with his unfaithful wife and returns to his ship.

Mr. Doering says that his Louisiana version "is probably to be classed as a *complainte* (ballad) of Norman origin." It is difficult for us to know how he came to this conclusion. I have it on the authority of a French folklorist, M. Joseph Chartois now in the United States, that there is absolutely no Norman version of this song, stating that it is current in the *Pays d'Ouest* and *Haute Bretagne*. He states, "Mais son assertion quant à l'origine normande

de cet air est fausse. Il n'en existe même pas à ma connaissance de leçon normande du 'Retour du marin' qui appartient aux Pays d'Ouest et à la Haute Bretagne. Les autres textes se rapportent à des complaintes et romances que l'on peut difficilement classer comme folkloriques — tout au moins en France. . . Ici, je le sais, la question est légèrement différente.³” Barbeau lists it found in northern and eastern France, Switzerland, and Italy (Piedmont). If one conjectures that this ballad is of Norman origin, when there is evidence of its general currency in other definite localities, might it not be equally as plausible to guess that it might even come from Spain.

The Canadian variant follows a prosodic pattern of tercets, eight syllables to the line, the last two lines of each tercet ending with masculine rhymes. The Anjou version follows an identical pattern. Perhaps as a consequence of Mr. Doering's doctoring his lines, we do not see such regularity in his particular version. His lines have from twelve to thirteen syllables, revealing that the original octosyllables have been jumbled and doubled to form verses vaguely approaching alexandrines. It may be that Mr. Doering's originally "garbled" version had eight-syllable lines.

It is quite sure, too, that Louisiana Acadian folk do not use the type of erudite French he attempts to present. He should never have written, "C'est vous qui m'avez; mais sur la terre . . .," which must be, "C'est vous qui m'avez mis sur la terre." The folk would not make such an error. In another line we read, "Car il se comporte. Bien il vous le dit lui-même," which must be, "Car il se comporte bien; il vous le dit lui-même." A third syntactic error in the same stanza reads, "... viens embrasser de mère . . .," which was no doubt originally a single verse somewhat like, "Viens embrasser ta mère." We are tempted to believe that the words of this whole line, running over illogically into the next, were originally two verses, which may have been sung thus:

"Viens donc à moi, mon cher enfant;
Viens donc embrasser ta maman. . ."

The second song, "Cribisse, cribisse" ("Crawfish, Crawfish"), is found in Miss Irene Whitfield's collection, *Louisiana French Folk*

³ "But his assertion is false as to the Norman origin of this air. To my knowledge there does not even exist a Norman version of 'The Seaman's Return' which belongs to the West Countries and Upper Brittany. The other texts concern laments and romances that could hardly be classed as folklore — at least in France. . . . Here, I take it, the question is slightly different."

Songs,⁴ with music; hence one can see no purpose in reprinting here almost the same text with no music. It is also a Creole patois song, being classified as such by Miss Whitfield. Mr. Doering says that it is "a typical Cajun dialect song." He also says that the "variations . . . [from the Whitfield version] seem sufficiently significant to warrant its printing." The only difference between the two is that Mr. Doering's version lacks the refrain, "bébé," which is found in Miss Whitfield's more complete version.

The next poem, "Rappelle-toi," is a deteriorated recollection of De Musset's poem by this same title. While Mr. Doering claims for it "folkloristic" qualities, this seems not to be true. Of course, we cannot deny that our great poets have drawn inspiration from the folk and possibly even vice versa. Mr. Doering's version shows, however, little evidence of oral transmission over a fair period of time. Besides, this song, since it is a badly remembered poem evidently recorded from a representative of a decadant French cultural group, could hardly ever become a folksong, since it lacks the essential narrative quality of the French folksong tradition. It is also impossible that such a poem or song could be quoted or sung among Louisiana Acadians if we consider them as a folk group. It would be equally absurd for a folklorist to record my singing of snatches from "An Afternoon of a Faun" with the object of presenting it as an example of what the Louisiana-French folk sing.

The next two poems, "Les enfants orphelins" and "La chanson de l'orpheline," do not show the syllabic pattern of French folksongs and seem much less to be Acadian songs. These poems, as Mr. Doering points out himself, obviously deal with the French revolutionary periods. I have already shown that the Acadians settled in Acadia something like a hundred years before the French Revolution.

The next poem, "Amour constant," Mr. Doering says "still seems to enjoy some popularity among the Louisiana French folk." To me, this statement seems absolutely false. I repeat again that Louisiana French folk do not use such bookish French or sing such sophisticated material. It is also curious to note how vague Mr. Doering is in his definition of "Cajuns," since he now refers to them as "Louisiana French folk."

The following song, "Le départ d'une mariée," centers around the Acadian tradition of the song sung to the bride at the bridal feast. In Jay K. Ditchy's volume on the Louisiana Acadians, repre-

⁴ Irène Thérèse Whitfield. *Louisiana French Folk Songs*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1939.

senting material of the late 19th century, a version of the "Bride's Farewell" is given. Mr. Ditchy says of this song, "Formerly it was almost generally customary for one of the girl friends of the young bride to come . . . to sing to her . . . the romance or rather complaint below . . ."⁵ Ditchy's version follows the octosyllabic pattern. Mr. Doering's song shows the same confused form as seen in his other poems. Here is a translation of it:

THE BRIDE'S FAREWELL

I

I must leave — fate orders it.
I must leave all that's so dear to me;
Yet for duty my soul has spared
The last cry of bitter regret.
Without mumuring let my tears run;
Let my heart shed off its pain;
But let it in the midst of fears
Keep the hope for happiness.

II

I must leave a beloved mother;
From her love must I tear myself.
I am not to spend my life beside her.
From the care of her arms fate takes me away.
Tomorrow, alas! her tender solicitude
Will seek her child again and again.
And whenever her glance falls upon my place,
Many a quiet tear will she shed.

III

And you, my father, whose gay tenderness
Makes beautiful your daughter's day
And softens the sadness of my mother,
Give her the hope of my coming back.
You will tell her to quiet her sufferings,
That God will bring me back in His arms.
You will paint for her the sweet rejoicing
Into which our hearts will pour.

IV

And you, my sisters, my faithful companions,
Accept the farewell of your loving one.
Whenever fate calls her far from your embrace,
Many a tear will run from her eyes.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 231.

You, friends all, keep in your hearts
The memory of a poor exiled girl,
And may always a tender thought
Express the wish for happiness.

I now translate Ditchy's version on this same theme:

I

It's time to leave you,
Fair flower of youth.
Girlhood's high estate,
Today I must leave you.

II

At early age I promised
Never to be married.
Today I find the advantage,
And my parents advised it.

III

I see the girls before me
Seated at the table.
As I look at them,
Tears fall from my eyes.

IV

The girdle that I wear
And the golden ring on my finger
My lover gave me them
To finish out his days with me.

V

"It is true, my fair one;
It is true, I gave them to you.
It is to spend your life
With me in tranquillity."

One can readily see that Ditchy's version has a folk quality that Mr. Doering's padded poem does not possess. It is true that Ditchy's version in the original French presents few dialect qualities. There are several reasons for this. First, the words of the song were doubtless recorded by an educated Acadian settler. Second, the song was collected at a time in Louisiana when the French language was fairly universal there, representing less changes than found in the fewer

surviving French-speaking folk groups of today. Third, this song, which was part of the tradition of fixed marriage customs for both educated and uneducated French Acadians, was current among all social groups. Thus it might have been collected from a formally cultured group that retained very little of the vast repertory of genuine folk pieces. The "Bride's Farewell" is somewhat comparable to the little ditty we sing on one's birthday, "Happy birthday to you," which may be sung in families that are completely devoid of a folklore background.

To my knowledge, although I do not want to affirm this with dogmatic certainty, "The Bride's Farewell" has lost its currency among the Acadian folk. One thing certain is that the version presented by Mr. Doering is a spurious one. It seems to represent the written composition of an individual, perhaps to celebrate a bridal ceremony when the custom of singing this song was definitely on the wane. I do not say that this poem does not represent fine feeling and tenderness, but I do assert that it lacks the quality of a genuine folk piece.

The last poem, "Edmond's Remorse," has a "Gothic" quality, says Mr. Doering. It resembles somewhat Child ballad 74, "Fair Margaret and Sweet William," which has a similar *mort revenant* motive. Also it is interesting to note that this poem is the only one of Mr. Doering's collection that approaches the octosyllable line, the characteristic ballad measure. Although the poem possesses a dramatic quality, a form so typical of genuine folk ballads, it still has a too highly sophisticated and too much of a pedestrian quality to qualify as a folk ballad. It, too, seems to be the composition of an individual author and not an example of oral transmutation from the crucible of folk tradition. It is possible that the anonymous author of the poem drew his inspiration from an imperfect recollection of a true folk complaint.

In closing, Mr. Doering says that "the Cajuns of Louisiana still possess a plethora of folk traditions which combine the cultural heritage they received from their forefathers and the frontier ruggedness of America." I certainly do not feel that there is a plethora of folklore in Louisiana. Perhaps he means that there is an overabundance of spurious dialect and fake local color material published there as tourist bait. With this conviction I would heartily agree. His use of the expression "frontier ruggedness" seems rather out of place and equally as vaporous as the term "Cajun." The Acadians, like all French peasants, have always represented a home-loving

and conservative folk, hardly associated with the swashbuckling and adventuresome frontier spirit as we understand it.

In summary, Mr. Doering's entire article shows one apparently genuine folk piece, "Cribisse, cribisse," which is not at all an Acadian song but a Creole patois ditty. It is certainly a song from the least representative group of Louisiana French folk tradition, and is of a superficial and bantering quality, lacking indeed the full cloth of what has been or ever will be a current folksong.

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MRS. GRIFFIN OF NEWBERRY ¹

by

Alton C. Morris

Among the numerous ballad and folksong singers who have contributed toward giving Florida an unusually diversified folksong tradition, Mrs. G. A. Griffin of Newberry, Florida, is by far the greatest benefactor. Her songs, upwards of sixty in number, include numerous ballads and songs of the English, Scotch, and Irish folksong tradition; white spirituals; and a goodly number of Southern fiddle tunes, many of which have not been reported elsewhere. Since these songs are of interest not only as instances of folk poetry but also as cultural and social documents, I offer a brief account of the singer who has treasured them and the background and circumstances under which they were recorded.

It was through the medium of the radio that Mrs. Griffin was first discovered. In answer to a request for ballads, sent out from WRUF Radio Station, an excellent version of "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" was sent in by Mrs. William Brown of Newberry. I immediately followed the lead. When interviewed, Mrs. Brown stated that her mother, Mrs. G. A. Griffin, knew many old ballads; consequently one of my colleagues and I visited Mrs. Griffin in March, 1934, and fortunately found her in a singing mood. When told of our mission, she replied, "Professor, if that's what you want, I can start singing now and sing until tomorrow morning and not repeat myself." Through subsequent performances she more than made good her boast.

Mrs. Griffin (née Georgia Civilty Hart) was born in Dooly County, Georgia, on February 23, 1863. Her father, from whom she received most of her songs, was named John Melton Moses Brantley James Madison Daniel Nathanael Moses Sinquefield Lawrence R. Ross Hart—John R. Hart for short. The Harts were people of means and refinement, most of them being doctors, lawyers, and plantation owners

¹ In the project of collecting, editing, and evaluating the folksongs of Florida, of which Mrs. Griffin's contribution is a part, I owe grateful acknowledgment to the General Education Board and the Julius Rosenwald Fund for grants in aid of research. The interest and scholarly advice of Professor Arthur Palmer Hudson of the University of North Carolina have been of real value. The recording of the songs was facilitated by the advice and assistance of Mr. John Lomax. For various kinds of help, the University of Florida and the National Youth Administration of Florida are due my thanks.

near Adel, Georgia. Mrs. Griffin is, so she claims, related to Nancy Hart, of Revolutionary War fame. Her love of song, dance, and adventure, she inherited from her father. She did not have educational opportunity, for in her family there was a feeling that education, though a necessity for men, was not for women.

At the age of thirteen, while she was convalescing from a tetanus infection at the home of a friend, a traveling show came through town. Leaving home without her parents' consent, she joined the troupe of dancers. She worked less than six months and received twenty-five dollars a week. Finally her mother found her and threatened dire consequences if she "didn't come down from the stage." She returned home with her mother and found employment in a cotton mill, bolting cloth at five dollars a week. The next year, 1877, she moved to Newberry, Florida, where she has lived ever since. She married Mr. Sam P. Nippur on January 19, 1882. In December of that year her first child was born and eleven others followed. Several of her children live in Newberry today and are among the successful merchants, farmers, and sawmill operators of that community.

Mr. Nippur died in 1908, and Mrs. Griffin married Mr. Jim Griffin. Circumstances made it necessary for her to take over her first husband's sawmill industry. This she did, and ran it profitably until she suffered the loss of everything she had in a bank failure some twenty years ago.

Mrs. Griffin is a forthright character. Although she lived through the Victorian period of euphemistic sham and bigotry, she remains untouched by the social taboos of that age. She is naïve, frank, and sincere. As a dancer, a fiddler, a fancy quilter, a sawmill operator, the possessor of the best repertory of folksongs in Florida, and as a mother who reared twelve children "of her own and two for other people," Mrs. Griffin has had a varied career. In her folksinging her only regret is that she cannot now sing these songs as well as she did forty years ago, when she could have "sung the pigeons off the roost." She loves the songs she sings, for they have been the one constant possession that has brought her pleasure and, in recent years, fame.

Permanent recordings have been made of Mrs. Griffin's songs by John Lomax and me and are now deposited in the Folksong Archive of the Library of Congress. The numbers following each title in this collection correspond to those assigned the songs in the Check List of the Folksong Archive. The key to the abbreviations used in making

reference to other variants of the individual songs may be found by referring to the bibliography at the end of the article.

THE ELFIN KNIGHT
(Archive 957-B3; Child 2)

For centuries songs have been written and tales composed in which lovers have been called upon to perform seemingly impossible tasks. Such a situation is the very heart of numerous chivalric romances. In both the English and the American tradition songs built on the pattern are popular. For examples, see *The Roxburghe Ballads*, VII, 295-296; Wyman and Brockway, pp. 106-109; Gardner and Chickering, pp. 385-386; and "Then I'll Come Back To You," found in many collections. "The Elfin Knight" shares popularity with other songs of the pattern. Marsh's inclusion of it in his *Book of a Thousand Songs* (1844), p. 144, attests its popularity in the middle of the last century. Of the strictly riddle ballads listed in Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, this is the most favored in both England and America, and in Ireland. For references to contemporary English variants, see Brewster, p. 23, and Belden, p. 1. For other American variants, see Sharp, I, 1-3; Barry, Eckstorm, and Smyth, p. 3; Henry FSSH, p. 31; PTFSL, X, 137; JAFI, VII, 228; XIII, 120-122; XVIII, pp. 49-51; XIX, 130; XXIII, 430; XXVI, 174; XXX, 284-285; Belden, pp. 1-3; Brewster, pp. 23-28; Linscott, pp. 169-171; Flanders, Ballard, Brown, and Barry, pp. 8-11.

Recorded on March 19, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song from her father, John R. Hart, an old singing schoolmaster of Adel, Georgia.

Go tell her to make me a cambric shirt,
Save rosemary and thyme,
Without any needle or seamster's work,
And she shall be a true lover of mine.

Go tell her to wash it all in a dry well,
Save rosemary and thyme,
Where water never sprung, or rain never fell,
And she shall be a true lover of mine.

Go tell her to hang it out on a thorn bush,
Save rosemary and thyme,
A bush that never grewed since Old Adam was born,
And she shall be a true lover of mine.

Go tell her to iron it against the house back,
Save rosemary and thyme,
Without looking down or letting it get black,
And she shall be a true lover of mine.

Go tell him to git him an acre of ground,
Save rosemary and thyme,
Betwixt the sea water and the sea sand,
And he shall be a true lover of mine.

Go tell him to plant it in little grain corn,
 Save rosemary and thyme,
 Tell him to plough it in with a horse's horn,
 And he shall be a true lover of mine.

Go tell him to reap it with a shackle of leather,
 Save rosemary and thyme,
 Tell him to haul it home on a pea-fowl's feather,
 And he shall be a true lover of mine.

Go tell him to thresh it against the house wall,
 Save rosemary and thyme,
 Without looking down or letting a grain fall,
 And he shall be a true lover of mine.

Go tell him when he gets all this work done,
 Save rosemary and thyme,
 Tell him to come to me for his cambric shirt,
 And he shall be a true lover of mine.

EARL BRAND

(Archive 992-A1; Child 7)

The only variant recovered in Florida so far follows the Child B narrative fairly closely but adds a reverdi opening not found in Child.

For other American variants, see Campbell and Sharp, pp. 9-15; Cox, pp. 18-19; Davis, pp. 86-92; Hudson, pp. 66-68; Randolph, p. 219; Shearin and Combs, p. 7; Greenleaf and Mansfield, p. 29; Mackenzie, *BSSNS*, pp. 9-10; Scarborough, *SC*, p. 115; Henry, *FSSH*, pp. 36-38; *SSSA*, pp. 45-46; Smith, pp. 101-103; *JAFL*, XIII, 115; XVI, 258-259; XVIII, 195; XXII, 77, 376; XXIV, 345; XXIX, 157; XXX, 289-291; XXXV, 338-339; XXXIX, 81-83; *BFSSNE*, 1, 4; *MLN*, XXV, 104; Brewster, pp. 37-39.

"Sweet William and Fair Ellendor." Recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, on April 27, 1937. She learned the song from her father, John R. Hart, a singing-school master of Dooly County, Georgia.

One morning, one morning, in the month of May
 The leaves looked green and gay.
 Sweet William, he hung his bugle around his neck,
 And so he went riding away.
 Sweet William, he hung his bugle around his neck
 And so he went riding away.

He rode, and he rode to fair Ellendor's Hall
 O, he had but a few words for to say,
 Saying, "Are you asleep, or are you awake

And ready to go with me?"
Saying, "Are you asleep, or are you awake
And ready to go with me?"

Fair Ellen, she rose and slipped on her clothes,
So ready to go with him;
Fair Ellen, she rose and slipped on her clothes,
So ready to go with him;
Fair Ellen, she rose and slipped on her clothes,
So ready to go with him.

He put her on the milk-white steed,
And mounted his bantering bay;
Sweet William, he hung his bugle around his neck,
And so he went riding away.
Sweet William, he hung his bugle around his neck,
And so he went riding away.

He rode and he rode to her father's hall;
He hadn't but a few words to say,
"Take care of your oldest daughter,
For your youngest one's carrying away.
Take care of your oldest daughter,
For your youngest one's carrying away."

"O, rise you up, you seven sons,
And take fair Ellendor down;
For it never can be said in old England
That he carried her all out of the town.
For it never can be said in old England
That he carried her all out of the town."

"It's light, it's light, fair Ellendor," he said,
"And hold my horse in hand,
Till I go play with your father and seven dear brothers,
On yonder landed strand.
Till I go play with your father and seven brothers
On yonder landed strand."

He put her on his milk-white steed,
He mounted the bantering bay;
Sweet William, he hung his bugle around his neck,
And so he went riding away.
Sweet William, he hung his bugle around his neck,
And so he went riding away.

He looked back, hit's once or twice;
 He looked back again,
 And he saw her father and seven dear brothers
 All wallowing in their blood.
 And she saw her father and seven dear brothers
 All wallowing in their blood.

He rode and he rode to his mother's hall
 He did have but a few words for to say,
 "Oh Mother, oh Mother, come make my bed down,
 For you'll surely not do it no more.
 Oh Sister, oh Sister, come do up my wounds,
 For you'll surely not do it no more."

THE TWO SISTERS

(Archive 960-A1; Child 10)

The text of this widely disseminated ballad suggests play-party use, but Mrs. Griffin, the communicant, did not know of any such association. For its American survivals, its European associates, its folktale relationships and scholarly discussion concerning it, see Brewster, pp. 42-43. Professor Brewster is preparing a monograph on the American versions of this ballad and its European affiliations. To the Brewster headnote may be added two recent appearances of the piece in American tradition: Flanders, Ballard, Brown, and Barry, pp. 3-4; Belden, pp. 16-24.

Recorded on March 19, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida. She learned the song as a girl in Dooly County, Georgia, from her father, John R. Hart, a native of Georgia.

There was two sisters living in the East,
 By rolling, by rolling;
 There was two sisters living in the East,
 Down by the waters rolling.

They were both courted by the young landlord,
 By rolling, by rolling;
 They were both courted by the young landlord,
 Down by the waters rolling.

He gave the oldest a gay gold ring,
 By rolling, by rolling;
 He gave the oldest a gay gold ring,
 Down by the waters rolling.

He gave the youngest a gay gold pin,
 By rolling, by rolling;
 He gave the youngest a gay gold pin,
 Down by the waters rolling.

The oldest one shoved the youngest one in,
By rolling, by rolling;
"Sister, oh Sister, oh hand me your hand,
Down by the waters rolling."

"You can have the landlord and all his land,
By rolling, by rolling;
You can have the landlord and all his land,
Down by the waters rolling."

THE CRUEL MOTHER

(Archive 961-B2; Child 20)

This is one of two variants of "The Cruel Mother" found in Florida. The folk art is nowhere better exemplified than in stanzas two and three of Mrs. Griffin's version, in which the lady's eventual assent to illicit coitus is suggested by the oak's bending and breaking, and the dire consequences thereof are suggested by her leaning herself "against the thorn." There is an excellent concord between the tragic mood of the text and the dignity of the tune in her version of this ballad. For additional texts and tunes, see Cox, pp. 29-30; Davis, pp. 133-136; Sharp, I, 56-62; *JAF*, XXV, 183; XXXII, 503; XLVI, 65; McGill, p. 83; *JFSS*, II, 109; Scarborough, SC, pp. 169-171.

Recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, on March 18, 1937. She learned the song from her father in Dooly County, Georgia. Her father, John R. Hart, is supposedly related to Nancy Hart, of Revolutionary War fame.

There was a lady lived in New York,
All de lone and de loney;
She fell in love with her father's clerk,
All down by the greeny woodside ny;
She fell in love with her father's clerk,
All down by the greeny woodside ny.

She leant herself against the oak,
All de lone and de loney;
It was it lent and then it broke,
All down by the greeny woodside ny;
It was it lent and then it broke,
All down by the greeny woodside ny.

She leaned her self against the thorn,
All de lone and de loney;
There she had two pretty babes borned,
All down by the greeny woodside ny;
There she had two pretty babes borned,
All down by the greeny woodside ny.

She takened her hairstring offen her hair,
All de lone and de loney;
She tied them up both hands and feet,
All down by the greeny woodside ny;
She tied them up both hands and feet,
All down by the greeny woodside ny.

She takened her pen knife ouden her pocket,
All de lone and de loney;
She pierced it to their tender hearts,
All down by the greeny woodside ny;
And she buried them both at Marblestone,
All down by the greeny woodside ny.

One even she was sitting in her father's hall,
All de lone and de loney;
She saw two pretty babes playing with a ball,
All down by the greeny woodside ny;
She saw two pretty babes playing with a ball,
All down by the greeny woodside ny.

"O babes, O babes, if you was mine,
All de lone and de loney;
I'd dress you up in silks so fine,
All down by the greeny woodside ny;
I'd dress you up in silks so fine,
All down by the greeny woodside ny."

"O Mother, O Mother, when we was yours,
All de lone and de loney;
You seemed to give us coarse nor fine,
All down by the greeny woodside ny;
You seemed to give us coarse nor fine,
All down by the greeny woodside ny.

"You takened your hairstring offen your hair,
All de lone and de loney;
You tied us up both hands and feet,
All down by the greeny woodside ny;
You tied us up both hands and feet,
All down by the greeny woodside ny.

"You takened your pen knife all ouden your pocket,
All de lone and de loney;
You pierced it to our tender hearts,
All down by the greeny woodside ny;
You buried us both at Marblestone,
All down by the greeny woodside ny."

THE TWO BROTHERS
(Archive 954-B1; Child 49)

Only one variant from Florida of this curious ballad-amalgam which in its fratricide theme and in its narrative development bears a close relationship to "Edward," Child 13. In its nursery language and its pathos, it calls to mind the human quality of "Sir Hugh, or, the Jew's Daughter," Child 155. The harping "the redbird out of its nest and the red fish out of the sea" recalls "King Orfeo," Child 19. The Florida variant, among the best of the American survivals, contains all of these characteristics and is thus very similar to Child B.

For other survivals of this ballad in America, see Sharp, I, 69-76; Barry, Eckstorm, and Smyth, pp. 99-100; Davis, pp. 147-157; Cox, pp. 33-35; Hudson, pp. 73-74; *JAFL* XXVI, 361-362; XXIX, 158; XLVIII, 298-299; *SFQ*, II, 65-68; *BFSSNE*, V, 6; McGill, pp. 55-58; Scarborough, *SC*, p. 166; Shearin and Combs, p. 7; Brewster, pp. 55-57; Belden, pp. 33-34.

"The Two School Boys." Recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida. She learned the song as a girl from her father, John R. Hart, an old singing-school master, a native of Dooley County, Georgia.

There is two school boys in our town;
What fine school mates they'd be;
If I could be by the side of them
What fine school boys they'd be.

It's Monday morning go to school,
It's Saturday night go home;
It's combing back these curly locks;
It's bid them welcome home.

"Oh Brother, oh Brother, will you play ball,
Or will you scatter and stone?"
"I'm too little and I'm too young;
So, Brother, let me alone."

He drew his penknife in his hand,
Both keen and sharp;
Between his long ribs and his short
He rested his brother's heart.

"Oh Brother, oh Brother, when you go home
And my father asks for me,
Tell him I'm in some foreign land
A-wishing to come home."

"Oh Mother, oh Mother, when you go home
And my father asks for me,
Tell him I'm in some foreign land
A-wishing to come home."

Little Old Tom went riding home,
Just as welcome as could be;
Who should he meet but his father dear
"What news have you brought to me?"

"Sad news, sad news, dear Father,
Sad news for thee;
My brother is in some foreign land
His lesson still to know."

Little Old Tom went riding home,
Just as welcome as could be;
Who should he meet but his mother dear
"What news have you brought to me?"

"Sad news, sad news, dear Mother,
Sad news for thee,
My brother is in some foreign land,
And wishing to come home."

Little Old Tom went riding home,
Just as welcome as could be;
Who should he meet but his fair Eleander dear
"What news have you brought to me?"

"Sad news, sad news, fair Eleander dear,
Sad news for thee;
My brother is dead and is in cold clay,
And buried in Christian charm."

She harbored around her true love's grave,
Five weeks to a day;
He harbored the redbird out of the nest
And the red fish out of the sea.

"Go away, fair Eleander dear;
Go away from me,
For if you stay here to the day of your death,
You'll see no more of me."

LIZIE WAN

(Archive 958-AS and 958-B1; Child 51)

Mrs. Griffin's rendition of this ballad approximates closely the Child A text. In both the Child version and her variant there is the situation of the mother's queries concerning the blood on the son's coat sleeve—a situation clearly resembling that in "Edward, Edward."

"Lizie Wan" has not been reported in the recent collections of traditional ballads from England, and it is rarely found among American ballad singers. Sharp, I, 89, reports a version from Kentucky.

"Fair Lucy." Recorded on March 19, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida. Before venturing to sing this ballad, Mrs. Griffin remarked: "Professor, I know one ballet that isn't so nice. It ain't so bad neither, just about a girl that got in the 'family way' by her no-count brother. But I ain't going to sing that one; you're not interested in such songs." When I assured her that I wanted the "naughty" songs as well as the "nice" ones, she lost herself in the singing of this tragic ballad. Stanzas 1-7 she sang on November, 1934. In April, 1937, John Lomax and I were making a permanent recording of this song from Mrs. Griffin. Before singing the song, she said to me: "You know I didn't sing that song right when I sang it for you before. Now I'm going to get hit right this time." She sang the song as here given, and remarked, "Now hit's right."

Fair Lucy a-setting in her father's hall,
A-weeping all of her moans.
And who did appear but her own fair mother,
A-saying, "What's fair Lucy done, done, done?"
A-saying, "What's fair Lucy done?"

"O Mother, O Mother, it's enough to make a wife weep;
It's enough to make a wife moan,
To think of the babe's in my body now,
And brother's the owner of thine, thine, thine;
And brother's the owner of thine."

Fair Lucy a-setting in her father's hall,
A-weeping all of her moans.
And who did appear but her own fair sister,
A-saying, "What's fair Lucy done, done, done?"
A-saying, "What's fair Lucy done?"

"O Sister, O Sister, it's enough to make a wife weep;
It's enough to make a wife moan,
To think of the babe's in my body now,
And brother's the owner of thine, thine, thine,
And brother's the owner of thine."

Fair Lucy a-setting in her father's hall,
A-weeping all of her moans,
And who did appear but her own fair brother,
A-saying, "What's fair Lucy done, done, done?"
A-saying, "What's fair Lucy done?"

"O Brother, O Brother, it's enough to make a wife weep;
It's enough to make a wife moan,
To think of the babe's in my body now,
And you are the owner of thine, thine, thine,
And you are the owner of thine."

He takened her by her lily-white hand,
 And he led her off in the woods;
 And there he 'bused fair Lucy's body all around, round, round,
 And he shed fair Lucy's blood,
 And he shed fair Lucy's blood.

"O what's that blood that's on your coat?
 My son come tell it to me."
 "It is the blood of the little grey horse
 That walked all under me, me, me,
 That walked all under me."

"O what's that blood that's on your vest?
 My son come tell it to me."
 "It is the blood of my old grey goose,
 That made a bed for me, me, me,
 That made a bed for me."

"O what's the blood that's on your shirt?
 My son come tell it to me."
 "O it's the blood of my sister, Fair Lucy,
 And Mother, a gaily deed, deed, deed;
 And Mother, a gaily deed."

"O what's you going to do when your father comes home?
 My son come tell it to me."
 "I'll set my foot on the gallant ship
 And I'll sail all over the sea, sea, sea;
 And I'll sail all over the sea."

"O when you coming back home any more?
 My son come tell it to me."
 "When the sun and moon set on yonder hill,
 Which I hope will never be, be, be;
 Which I hope will never be."

LORD BEICHAN
 (Archive 958-B1; Child 53)

One full text and this fragment have been recorded from Florida singers. For a discussion of this ballad and numerous references, see Kittredge, *JAFL*, 294-295. Marsh's inclusion of this ballad in his *New Book of a Thousand Songs for the Million*, pp. 171-175, attests its popularity in America in the middle of the last century. For additional American texts, see Cox, *FSS*, pp. 36-41; *TBWV*, pp. 16-23; Davis, pp. 158-171; Hudson, pp. 75-77; Wyman and Brockway, p. 58; Pound, pp. 33-37; Smith, pp. 104-107; Sharp, I, 77-88; *JAFL*, XVIII, 209; XX, 251; XXII, 64; XXIII, 451; XXVI, 353; XXVIII, 45; Flanders and Brown, p. 2-4; Shearin and Combs, pp. 7-8; Henry, *FSSH*, pp. 55-59; Thomas, pp. 86-87; Barry,

Eckstorm, and Smyth, pp. 106-122; Mackenzie, *BSSNS*, pp. 16-19; Gardner and Chickering, pp. 143-145.

"Lord Bateman." Recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song in Adel, Georgia, from her father, John R. Hart. Of the sixty-odd songs that Mrs. Griffin sang, this is the only fragment in the entire lot. "I know the story," she said, "but I just can't put the song together as it should be, and I ain't goin' to do it up just tolerably good."

She wears rings on every finger,
On every finger she wears three,
On the middle finger she wears three.

THE CHERRY TREE CAROL
(Archive 963-A3; Child 54)

This ballad with its apocryphal story and its odd tune can boast of considerable antiquity. The fifth century Pseudo-Matthew Gospel, Chapter XX, relates the frame of the story. The medieval Coventry Plays made use of the apocryphal narrative, changing the palm tree of the older tale into the cherry tree. The ballad's suggestion of Mary's infidelity is another medieval addition to the story. It is not improbable that the ballad in its earliest form was a dance song; the retention of the word *carol* in the title would suggest its affiliations with the dance carols which the medieval church took over because of their unusual popularity. Moreover, the tempo of Child A and B versions is admirably suited for the dance, and so is the Davis A version (p. 172).

For other American versions, see Davis, pp. 172-174; Campbell and Sharp, pp. 43-44; McGill, p. 60; Pound, p. 47; Barry, Eckstorm, and Smyth, p. 446; Scarborough, *OTNFS*; *JAFL*, XXIX, 293-294; XXX, 297; Smith and Ruffy, pp. 12-14; Henry, *FSSH*, p. 59; *BFSSNE*, VI, 6.

"Sweet Mary and Sweet Joseph." Recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida. Concerning the history of the song she had this to say: "Of all my songs, that one about Sweet Mary and Sweet Joseph is the only one I made up all by myself. One rainy afternoon I went upstairs to my room and laid down on my bed and made it up. I sung it for Pa and he liked it a whole heap." I questioned her as to the possibility of her having heard the song somewhere and recalling it on that particular afternoon, but she was positive that it was of her own composition. In the summer of 1940 Mrs. Griffin appeared before a class in American Balladry and Folksongs at the University of Florida and when asked whether she had any songs of her making, she replied spontaneously by singing again this version of the "Cherry Tree Carol."

Sweet Mary and sweet Joseph walked out on the green,
Where apples and cherries aplenty to be seen,
Where apples and cherries aplenty to be seen.

Sweet Mary spoke to Joseph so meekly and so kind,
"Come gather me some cherries for I am with child,
Come gather me some cherries for I am with child."

Sweet Joseph spoke to sweet Mary so crabby and so crime,
 "Let the father of the baby gather the cherries for thine,
 Let the father of the baby gather the cherries for thine."

Sweet Jesus broke the limbs down so low into Mary's hands,
 Sweet Mary gathered cherries off the endmost bows,
 Sweet Mary gathered cherries off the endmost bows.

Sweet Joseph taken sweet Mary all on his right knee.
 "Pray tell me sweet Mary when his birthday will be.
 Pray tell me sweet Mary when his birthday will be."

Sweet Joseph taken sweet Mary all on his left knee.
 "Pray tell me sweet Mary when his death day will be,
 Pray tell me sweet Mary when his death day will be."

"All on that same Friday when all things are clear,
 The earth it shall be darkened and the sun disreappear,
 The earth it shall be darkened and the sun disreappear.

Then the righteous of the body shall rise from the tomb,
 Then the righteous of the body shall rise from the tomb."

YOUNG HUNTING

(Child 68)

Although this ballad is especially popular in the Southern Appalachians and the Virginia Piedmont, it has been found from Maine to Florida and as far West as Missouri. For other texts and references to American survivals, see Davis, pp. 182-190; Sharp, I, 104-105; Hudson, pp. 77-78; Cox, pp. 42-44; Barry, Eckstorm, and Smyth, pp. 122-128; Smith, pp. 107-108; *JAFL*, XVIII, 295; XX, 252-253; XXX, 298-302; XLIV, 67-68; *PTFLS*, X, 143; Scarborough, SC, pp. 135-136; Sandburg, p. 64; Randolph, pp. 203-205; Henry, *FSSH*, pp. 145-146; Shearin and Combs, p. 8; Belden, pp. 34-37.

"Pretty Polly or the Scotland Man." This text was taken down from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, in June, 1937.

"Come in, come in, my pretty little bird,
 And stay this night with me.
 For I have a cage of the very, very best,
 And I'll give it up to thee,
 And I'll give it up to thee."

"I won't come in and I shan't come in,
 Nor stay this night with thee,
 For you might rob me of my life
 Like you did the Scotland man,
 Like you did the Scotland man."

"Come in, come in, my pretty little bird,
And stay this night with me,
For I have a ring of the very, very best,
And I will give it up to thee,
And I will give it up to thee."

"If I had my bow and arrow,
My arrow and my string,
I would shoot you through the very, very heart
All among the leaves so green,
All among the leaves so green."

"Oh, if you had your bow and arrow,
Your arrow and your string,
I'd fly away to the heavens above
Where I'd never more be seen.
Where I'd never more be seen."

LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ANNET

(Archive 992-B1; Child 73)

The ten variants of "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" found in Florida, among which Mrs. Griffin's is characteristic, conform rather closely to Child A. Mr. E. S. Miller, in an article in the *SOUTHERN FOLKLORE QUARTERLY*, I, No. 4, pp. 25-39, has used the collected versions of "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" to show that in folksong transmission the words often become nonsense and turn up later in entirely new sense either as an improvement or as a deterioration of the original. "Be tired my days" for "betide my days" in Stanza 10, and "Her merry was made of green" for "Her merry maids all in green" are additional examples in point.

For references to English and American texts and tunes, see the headnote to Belden, pp. 37-38, which contains nearly fifty citations. To these may be added Broadwood and Maitland, p. 42; Brewster, pp. 58-70; Smith and Rufty, p. 17 ff; Cambiaire, pp. 34-36; *SFQ*, II, 69. For a variant used in Florida fiction, see C. H. Matschat's *Suwannee River*, p. 63.

"Lord Thomas and Fair Elander." This song was recorded from the singing of Mrs. Griffin in April, 1936, and represents the first folksong collected from Mrs. Griffin. It came as a result of a reply from her daughter, Mrs. Brown, to a request sent out by the WRUF radio station on one of its Saturday night barn-dance programs.

Lord Thomas, Lord Thomas is a very brave fellow;
He courted the King's daughter;
The King he had but one daughter;
Fair Elander was her name.
The King he had but one daughter;
Fair Elander was her name.

"O Mother, O Mother, come riddle to me;
Come riddle to me at once.
Would you go marry Fair Elander dear,
Or bring the Brown Girl home?
Would you go marry Fair Elander dear,
Or bring the Brown Girl home?"

"You know the Brown Girl's house and land;
You know Fair Elander's none,
And if I must come riddle to you at once,
Go bring the Brown Girl home.
And if I must come to riddle to you at once,
Go bring the Brown Girl home."

He dressed himself in silk so fine;
His merry maid all of green,
And every town that he rode through,
They taken him to be some king.
And every town that he rode through,
They taken him to be some king.

He rode and rode to Fair Elander's hall;
There he knocked the full out of the ring.
There were none so ready as Fair Elander dear,
To rise and let him come in.
There were none so ready as Fair Elander dear,
To rise and let him come in.

"What news, what news, have you brought to me?"
"Sad news, sad news I have brought to thee,
For I have come to ask you to my wedding,
For tomorrow it is to be.
For I have come to ask you to my wedding,
For tomorrow it is to be."

"Sad news, sad news you have brought to me;
Sad news you have brought to me,
For I always thought I would be your bride myself,
But you the bridegroom," says she.
"For I always thought I would be your bride myself,
But you the bridegroom," says she.

"O Mother, O Mother, come riddle to me;
Come riddle to me at once.
Would you go to Lord Thomas' wedding,
Or tarry at home alone?
Would you go to Lord Thomas' wedding,
Or tarry at home alone?"

"You know you have many a friend;
You know a many a foe;
And if I must come riddle to you at once,
To stay at home alone.
And if I must come riddle to you at once,
To say at home alone."

"I will be tired my days;
I will be tired my years.
I will go to Lord Thomas' wedding," she says,
"If I lose my own heart's blood.
I will go to Lord Thomas' wedding," she says,
"If I lose my own heart's blood."

She dressed herself in silk so fine;
Her merry was made of green,
And every town she rode through,
They taken her to be some queen.
And every town she rode through,
They taken her to be some queen.

She rode, she rode to Lord Thomas' hall;
She knocked the full out of the ring.
There were none so ready as Lord Thomas so dear,
To rise and let her come in.
There were none so ready as Lord Thomas so dear,
To rise and let her come in.

He taken her by her lily-white hand;
He led her through the hall;
He led her up in the upper chamber
Among those ladies all.
He led her up in the upper chamber
Among the ladies all.

"Is this your bride so dark and brown,
So wonderly dark and brown,
When you might have married me, a fair lady,
As ever the sun shone on?
When you might have married me, a fair lady,
As ever the sun shone on?"

The Brown Girl walking across the floor,
With a penknife in her hand
Betwixt the long ribs and short,
She reached Fair Elander's heart.
Betwixt the long ribs and short,
She reached Fair Elander's heart.

"What makes you look so wonderful white,
 So most wonderful white and pale,
 When you used to bear as fresh a color
 As ever I did see?
 When you used to bear as fresh a color
 As ever I did see?"

"Are you blind? O, can't you see,
 O, can't you see my own heart's blood?
 O, can't you see, O, can't you see
 My own heart's blood come trickling to my knees?
 O, can't you see, O, can't you see
 My own heart's blood come trickling to my knees?"

"O, yes, I can see, I can see,
 I can see your own heart's blood.
 O, yes, I can see, I can see
 Your own heart's blood come trickling to your knees.
 O, yes, I can see, I can see
 Your own heart's blood come trickling to your knees."

Lord Thomas had a very bright sword,
 Most wonderful sharp and keen.
 He cut the Brown Girl's head off,
 And he kicked it against the wall.
 He cut the Brown Girl's head off,
 And he kicked it against the wall.

He put the point against his breast,
 The handle against the wall.
 "If any one comes and inquires for us,
 Pray tell them we are asleep.
 If anyone comes and inquires for us,
 Pray tell them we are asleep.

"It's bury Fair Elander in my arms,
 The Brown Girl at my feet,
 So I can tell my true loves apart,
 As long as we be asleep.
 So I can tell my true loves apart,
 As long as we be asleep."

LORD LOVEL

(Archive 992-B2; Child 75)

The large numbers of recovered variants of this ballad and their wide distribution throughout America attest its widespread popularity. Stall prints, broadside publications, and nineteenth-century songsters have aided in keeping

it alive, but its intrinsic merit as a straight-forward narrative of an age-old situation as well as the charm of its catchy metrical structure account for its continued popularity.

That the song has been parodied has been pointed out by Davis, pp. 258-259, and Belden, who gives two parodies on p. 54. Tony Pastor's *Union Songster*, 1864, includes a parody, one that Belden cites:

Lord Lovel he sat in St. Charles's Hotel
In St. Charles Hotel sat he,
As fine a case of a Southern Swell
As ever you'd wish to see, see, see
As ever you'd wish to see.

Mrs. Griffin's variant follows the conventional American version usually reported. The occurrence of *till* for *to* in Stanza 5 is an interesting Old English survival. For additional variants, see Sharp, I, 147-148; Davis, pp. 240-358; Pound, pp. 4-8; Cox, pp. 78-82; McGill, pp. 9-13; Shoemaker, pp. 140-141; Sandburg, pp. 70-71; Randolph, pp. 193-195; Scarborough, pp. 99-100; Hudson, pp. 69-70; Smith, pp. 121-124; Smith and Rufty, pp. 20-22; Flanders and Brown, pp. 215-216; *JAPL*, XVIII, 291-293; XIX, 283; XXIV, 332; XXVIII, 199-201; XXIX, 160-161; XXXV, 342-343; *SFQ*, II, 69-70; *BFSSNE*, I, 5; Gardner, p. 205; Brewster, pp. 71-91; Belden, pp. 52-54; Linscott, p. 233.

"Lord Lover." Recorded in April, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song from her father, John R. Hart, an old singing-school master of Dooly County, Georgia.

Lord Lover, Lord Lover stood at the castle gate,
All dressed and ready to go,
When up stepped Lady Nancy Bell
To bid her lover goodbye.
When up stepped Lady Nancy Bell
To bid her lover goodbye.

"O, where are you going, Lord Lover?" she said.
"O, where are you going?" said she.
"I'm going away, Lady Nancy Bell,
Strange countries for to see;
I'm going away, Lady Nancy Bell,
Strange countries for to see."

"O, when will you be back, Lord Lover?" she said.
"O, when will you be back?" said she.
"In a year or so or three or more,
I'll return to my fair Nancy;
In a year or so or three or more,
I'll return to my fair Nancy."

He hadn't been gone but twelve months to a day,
 Strange countries for to see,
 For an angry thought came into his mind,
 Lady Nancy Bell I must see;
 For an angry thought came into his mind,
 Lady Nancy Bell I must see.

He rode and he rode a milk white steed,
 Till London he did ride,
 And there heard King Patsybells' ringing,
 And the people all mourning round;
 And there heard King Patsybells' ringing,
 And the people all mourning round.

"O what's the matter, Lord Lover?" he said.
 "O what's the matter?" says he.
 "There's a young lady dead," the old woman said,
 "And some called her Lady Nancy;
 There's a young lady dead," the old woman said,
 "And some called her Lady Nancy."

He ordered the grave to be opened;
 He ordered it opened wide,
 And there he kissed her cold white lips,
 And the tears came trickling down;
 And there he kissed her cold, white lips,
 And the tears came trickling down.

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

(Archive 962-B1; Child 79)

Five fairly good texts of this ballad have been recorded in Florida, among which Mrs. Griffin's is characteristic. For additional texts and tunes, see Davis, pp. 278-288; Sharp, I, 157-159; Cox, pp. 88-93; *JAFL*, XIII, 119; XXIII, 429; XXX, 306-309; XXXIX, 96; XLIV, 63-64; Henry, *FSSH*, pp. 70-71; Hudson, pp. 93-95; Cambiaire, pp. 121-122; Pound, pp. 20-21; Scarborough, *SC*, 167-169; Smith and Ruffy, p. 23; Randolph, pp. 180-181; Brewster, pp. 97-98.

"The Three Little Babes." Recorded on April 19, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who has lived in Florida practically all her life. She learned the song as a girl from some friends in Adel, Georgia.

A lady, a lady fair
 She had but three small children dear,
 She sent them away to some merry-go-land
 To learn some grammaree.

They hadn't been there but a very short time,
 Yet scarcely three months and a day,

Before a sickness fell all over the land
And takened her three babes away.

"O, is there any Lord in the heaven so kind
To send my babes back home?
O, is there any heaven and Lord so fine
To send my babes back home?"

She set her table both forth, both white,
And covered it with bread and wine,
To see if her babes would come and eat,
Yes, eat and drink of mine.

"I can't come in, my own dear Mother,
Nor eat and drink of yours;
For our Savior is standing, calling for us,
And we must go and join."

"Rise up, rise," said the oldest one;
"Rise up all on your feet;
For our Savior is standing, calling for us,
And we must go and join."

She spread her beds all in the back room,
And there she put three white sheets,
And one of these was a golden one
To see if her babes could rest.

"I can't come in, my own dear Mother,
Nor stay this night with thee;
For our Savior is standing, calling for us,
And we must go and join.

"Green, green grass grows at our feet,
Cold clouds roll over our heads,
And the tears you've shed for us
Have wet our winding sheet.

"Go away, my own dear Mother,
Don't weep no more for us,
If you stay here till the day you're dead,
You'll see no more of us.

"Rise up, rise up," said the oldest one,
"Rise up and let us in,
For our Savior is standing, calling for us,
And we must go and join."

SIR HUGH, OR, THE JEW'S DAUGHTER

(Archive 981-A2; Child 165)

Only two variants of this ballad have been found in Florida. The title "The Jeweler's Daughter," is an interesting variation occasioned by oral transmission. All vestiges of the Miracle of Our Lady and hints of ritual murder are noticeably absent from the Florida variants.

For references, see Cox, pp. 120-127; Davis, p. 400; Sharp, I, 222-229; Hudson, pp. 116-117; Smith, pp. 148-150; Brewster, pp. 128-133; Scarborough, *SC*, p. 171; *JAFL*, XV, 195; XXIX, 293; XXX, 322; XXXV, 344; XXXIX, 212; XLVII, 358; Henry, *FSSH*, p. 102; *BFSSNE*, V, 7. For a good analysis of the song and the relation of American versions to the older type, and for reference to English recordings of the piece, see Belden, pp. 69-73; Flanders, Ballard, Brown and Barry, pp. 254-256.

"The Jeweler's Daughter." Recorded on April 19, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. George A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida. She learned the song in Dooly County, Georgia, from her father, a native Georgian.

It rains, it pours, it rains, it pours,
It rains both night and day.
The prettiest boy in our whole town
Came down there playing ball.

They tossed the ball so high, so low,
And then again so low;
They tossed it onto the jeweler's garden,
Where man was daren't to go.

Down stepped the Jeweler's daughter,
Dressed in green and yellow,
"Come in, come in, my pretty little boy,
And get your ball again."

"I can't and I shan't and I won't come in,
Without my playmates all,
For that would get to my mother's ears;
Her tears would surely fall."

She showed to him an apple seed,
And then a gay gold ring;
She showed him a cherry rose red,
And that's what 'ticed him in.

She takened him by his lily-white hand,
And led him through the wall;
She led him into the chamber room,
Where none could hear them call.

She pinned him in a silver chair;
She pinned him with a pin;

She shined a basin both bright and brass
And to catch his heart's blood in.

"O nurse me, nurse me, now or never,
O nurse me now or never;
If I ever live to be man,
I'll give you a veil forever."

THE BAILIFF'S DAUGHTER OF ISLINGTON

(Archive 963-B3; Child 105)

This ballad, definitely bourgeois in its social tone, has not had the widespread popularity in America that the numerous printed versions indicate that it has enjoyed in England. This Florida version retains the situation found in the Child version but adds the motif of the bailiff's daughter being held captive. It retains the situation of the two lovers' seven-year separation imposed by the parents in order to alienate the lovers' affections. The lovers' absence is not motivated in the Florida version as it is in the Child piece.

There are some interesting bits of folk diction here: "to pollidge" means to talk, to carry on a conversation; "wearied pains" is an unusual epithet; "to turn a-loose" is commonly found among the "cracker" element in the state.

For English versions of this ballads see Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, I, 203; Sharp, *English Folksongs*, II, 35. For references to American survivals, see Davis, pp. 383, 585; Hudson, pp. 114-117; Flanders, Ballard, Brown, and Barry, p. 63; Sharp, I, 219-221; Linscott, pp. 160-163.

"There Was a Youth." Recorded on April 15, 1934, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, who learned the song from "Cousin Lou" Brown when Mrs. Griffin "wasn't but a wee little bit of a girl." "Cousin Lou" lived in Dooly County, Georgia.

There was a youth, a loving youth;
He was the squire's son.
He courted the bailiff's daughter
Till the bailiff's horse could run.

He locked her up, he kept her confined;
He kept her confined seven years or longer;
He kept her confined seven years or longer
While no man don't her see.

At last one day he gave her a play;
She walked out to play;
She dressed herself in silks and satins so fine;
So slyly she ran away.

She walked out and she walked down;
She sat down by the green oak tree,
She sat down by the green oak tree
For to rest her wearied pains.

She looked up the road and whom she see?
 None but her own true love,
 None but her own true love,
 None but her own true love who courted her seven
 long years ago.

O, up she got and halted his bridle,
 Halted his bridle and the ring she took,
 Halted his bridle and the ring she took,
 Saying, "Kind sir, won't you stop and pollidge with me
 Till I rest my wearied pains?"

"O yes, O yes, O yes, kind miss,
 I will stop and pollidge with you,
 Yes, I will stop and pollidge with you
 Till you rest your wearied pains.

"Can you tell me anything about
 My own true love who courted me seven long years ago?"
 "O, yes, I can tell you all about.
 She's dead and buried where no man don't her see."

"O, turn me a-loose and let me go,
 And I will travel all over this globe,
 And I will travel all over this globe
 Where no man don't me know."

"O yes, O yes, kind sir,
 I will tell you again.
 She is yet alive, standing close by your horse's side
 Just ready to be your bride."

O down he got and upon her finger
 And upon her finger that the rings he put;
 Upon her finger that the rings he put
 And he married her that night.

THE GYPSY LADDIE

(Archive 957; Child 200)

Four variants of the "Gypsy Laddie" have been recovered from Florida, among which Mrs. Griffin's version is perhaps the best. In one the variant Lord Thomas plays the role of cuckold husband; otherwise the Florida variants are conventional pieces. The words and tune of Mrs. Griffin's variant are admirably wedded into a semi-comic tone in keeping with the light-heartedness with which the ballad muse treated the theme. For other American variants, see Martz's *Sensational Songster*, p. 65; Davis, pp. 423-431; Cox, pp. 130-136; *TBWV*, pp. 31-35; Sharp, I, 237-239; McGill, pp. 14-17; Eckstorm and Smyth, pp. 269-277; Scarborough, *SC*, pp. 218-221; Henry, *FSSH*, 110-112; Matteson

and Henry, pp. 6-7; Hudson, pp. 117-119; Smith and Rufty, pp. 44-46; Stout, p. 11, 44-46; *JAF*, XVIII, 191-193; XIX, 294; XXXII, 80; XXIV, 346-347; XXV, 173; XXVI, 353; XXX, 324-325; XLVIII, 385-386; Cambiaire, pp. 56-59; Brewster, p. 134; Belden, pp. 73-76.

"It Was Late in the Night When Johnny Came Home." Recorded March 8, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song from her father in Dooly County, Georgia.

It was late in the night when Johnny came home
Inquiring for his Lady, O,
But this reply was made to him,
"She's gone with the Gypsy David."

Chorus

Raddle up a dinktum, a dinktum, a dinktum,
Raddle up a dink kye aisy,
Raddle up a dinktum, whoopee little dinktum,
My, ain't I aisy?

"Saddle up, saddle up, my little black horse;
My roan is not so speedy.
I've rode him all night, and I'll ride him all day,
Or I'll overtake my lady.

"I rode and I rode to the sea seaside
And there it was black and muddy;
Come back, come back, my own true love,
Come back, come back, my honey.

"I swear by my side and hang by my side
That you'll never lack for money.

. " . . .

"I won't come back, and I shan't come back
For you or your land and money;
I wouldn't give a kiss from the Gypsy's lips
For you and your land and money."

"O what will you do with your house and land?
O what will you do with your money?
O what will you do with your two little babes,
To go with the Gypsy David?"

"With you I'll leave my house and land;
With you I'll leave my money;
With you I'll leave my two little babes,
To go with the Gypsy David."

"Pray when you get to the Gypsy's land,
Please write me back a letter;
And if they don't treat you well,
Perhaps I'll come after you."

She hadn't been there but a very short time,
And she wrote him back a letter,
"Perhaps if you'll come after me,
Perhaps I'll treat you better."

"Once I had a nice feather bed,
And once I had a honey,
But now I'm a-lying all over the hay
With the gypsies marching round me."

LORD DERWENTWATER

(Archive 963-A2; Child 208)

For the student of traditional English balladry "Lord Derwentwater" (Child 208) assumes considerable importance. This is the first appearance of this ballad in America, and so far as I have been able to find out, it has not been recovered in England since Motherwell printed a version of it in his *Minstrelsy*.

Mrs. Griffin's version of "Lord Derwentwater" is not a full text, there being some faulty stanzas. The story, so far as one can follow it, approximates closely the D version of the Child texts. A few changes are evident. The name "Lord Derwentwater" becomes "Lord Bellanter," and in the Florida version no reason is assigned for Lord Derwentwater's execution. Child summarizes the historical fact thus:

Earl of Derwentwater, James Ratcliffe, who being suspected of having been engaged in concerting a rising in the North of England in behalf of the Pretender, was summoned to court by the Secretary of State in September, 1715. Hereupon he took arms and was one of the fifteen-hundred English and Scotch who were forced to an inglorious surrender at Preston, November 14. Derwentwater was committed to the Tower, December 9; was impeached of high treason and pled guilty in January; was sentenced to death February 9; and was executed on February 24, 1716.

The significance of the recovery of "Lord Derwentwater" lies in the fact that here has survived a ballad dealing with a Border incident of a rather obscure, not too thrilling, character. Some ballads live because of their tunes; the air to "The King's Love Letter" is neither stirring nor unusually melodic. How to account for its survival has been puzzling. In the ballad there is an element of folk superstition, which may or may not help to account for its persistence—I allude to stanza seven of the Florida version, in which a reference is made to nose bleeding. Fraser's *Golden Bough* and Thompson's

Motif Index emphasize the fact that superstitions about bleedings of all kinds play an important part in the life of the unlettered folk, especially in their folktales. Bleeding of the nose always portends something evil. Walpole's Gothic romance, *The Castle of Otranto*, makes use of the motif in foreboding evil consequences; and in Act II, Scene ii, of *The Duchess of Malfi*, Delio speaks to Antonio: "How superstitiously we mind our evils! . . . The throwing down of salt . . . the bleeding at nose." And in Act II, Scene iii, Antonio says:

My nose bleeds;
One that were superstitious would count
This ominous — when it merely comes by chance.

The finding of another eighteenth-century ballad in the South is another instance of our retention of eighteenth-century English culture in America. Much has been said of the retention of Elizabethan ballads and Elizabethan culture generally, particularly in the Appalachian region; possibly not enough has been said of a similar transfer of eighteenth-century ballads and eighteenth-century culture.

For another version of this song with tune, see Motherwell's *Minstrelsy*, p. 349.

"The King's Love Letter."² Recorded in March, 1933, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida. She learned this song from her father, in Dooly County, Georgia. Mrs. Griffin said that this song was one of her father's favorites — and he knew many, for he was one of the old singing-school masters who conducted singing schools in numerous villages near Adel, Georgia. Of her father's singing of the song she commented, "The last time Pa sang this song to me he was up on top of a horse, pulling logs. He sang it to the top of his voice." Mrs. Griffin expressed a sincere liking for this song. When asked why she liked it she said, "Why, man, it's just a pretty song; don't you know a pretty song when you see one? The words are pretty; the song is pretty; it's all pretty."

The king he wrote a love letter,
And he sealed it over with gold,
And he sent hit to the Duke of Bellanter
To read it if he could.

The first few lines that he did read
Hit caused him for to smile,
But the next few lines that he did read,
The tears from his eyes did flow.

He called up his oldest one
To bridle and saddle his steed.
"I've got to go to London town
Although I have no need."

² To Professor A. P. Hudson of the University of North Carolina is due credit for identification of the ballad as Child 208.

Before he rode up in the edge of town,
 He met a jolly old man.
 "Your life, your life, you Duke of Bellanter,
 Your life I will command."

"Hit's make your will, you Duke of Bellanter,
 Hit's make your will all around."

"Hit's two and two to my two oldest sons
 Hit's two and two all round.

"Hit's all my ox, steed, and the rest of my property
 Will retain you to a Lady's side."

.

He stooped over the window;
 The flowers smelt so gay
 Till his nose gushed out and bleeding

Just before his head busted quite open
 He spoke one word or two:
 "Come all you lords, you pretty lordies
 And be kind to my baby."

JAMES HARRIS, OR, THE DEMON LOVER
 (Archive 982-B1; Child 243)

Stall prints and broadside sheets have no doubt aided in giving this ballad wide circulation. See *JAFL*, XVIII, 207-209, for a broadside text. Belden, p. 79, notes that "communal recreation" has transformed this ballad from a prosaic and pedestrian piece into a ballad good enough to maintain a strong hold on the affections of ballad singers. For references to English versions, see Belden, p. 79. For references to American variants, see *JAFL*, XX, 257-258; XXV, 274-275; XXVI, 360-361; XXXV, 347-348; XLV, 21-25; XLVIII, 295-296; XLIX, 209-211; *SFQ*, II, 75-76; *BFSSNE*, VII, 11; Davis, pp. 439-478; Scarborough, *SC*, pp. 151-156; Cox, pp. 139-149; Sharp, I, 256-257; Hudson, 119-122; *PTFLS*, X, 156-162; Pound, 43-45; Stout, pp. 11-13; Smith, 151-155; Brewster, 136-148; Flanders, Ballard, Brown, and Barry, pp. 95-97; Sandburg, p. 66; Shearin, p. 3; Shearin and Combs, p. 8; Wyman and Brockway, pp. 54-61; Smith and Ruffy, p. 46; Henry, *SSSA*, p. 59; *FSSH*, p. 113; Randolph, p. 201.

"The House Carpenter." Recorded on April 18, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song from her father, John R. Hart, of Dooley County, Georgia.

"Once I could have married a rich man's daughter,
 And she would have married me,
 But I've just returned from the salt water sea,
 All for the love of thee,
 All for the love of thee.

"If you will forsake of the house carpenter,
And come go along with me,
Where the grass grows green
On the banks of the Sweet Malee,
On the banks of the Sweet Malee."

She dressed her babes so neat and clean,
And laid them down on a feather bed;
"Lie there, lie there, my darling babes,
To bear your father's company,
To bear your father's company."

She hadn't been on board but about three weeks,
I'm sure hit wasn't four,
When she weeped, she weeped and she weeped,
Till she weeped most bitterly,
Till she weeped most bitterly.

"Are you weeping for my gold?
Or are you weeping for my store,
Or are you weeping for your little house carpenter
Which you'll never see no more,
Which you'll never see no more?"

"I'm not weeping for my house carpenter,
I'm not weeping for your store;
I'm weeping for my poor little babes,
Which I'll not see any more,
Which I'll not see any more."

She hadn't been gone but about six weeks,
I'm sure it wasn't nine,
Till the boat sprung a leak and it sunk for the deep,
And it sunk to rise no more,
And it sunk to rise no more.

"It's cursed, cursed, to all mankind,
It's cursed to all mankind,
For I'm taken away from my darling babe,
Which I'll never see no more,
Which I'll never see no more.

"What banks, what banks, what banks?" says she.
"What banks as white as snow?"
"It's banks of Heaven, a Heaven on high,
Where all good people go,
Where all good people go."

THE SUFFOLK MIRACLE
(Archive 958-A1 and 976-B1; Child 272)

In many modern survivals of the old ballads the supernatural has been deleted or rationalized. The "Suffolk Miracle" is a notable exception. In this Florida version, though certain hiatuses in the meaning make the narrative difficult to follow, the supernatural element is noticeably retained. Distinctive in the Florida version is a speaking wound which orders the lady to unloose the bands binding it. As in most versions, the ghost rider who rides as "hard as wind can blow" plays a major role. "The Suffolk Miracle" is one of the ballads that transmission and transplanting to these shores have improved, for the Child versions are definitely literary in style and feeble in narrative execution.

For other American texts, see Cox, pp. 152-153; Davis, pp. 482-484; Sharp, I, 261-266; Barry, Eckstorm, and Smyth, p. 314; Flanders, Ballard, Brown, and Barry, pp. 86-87.

"There Was a Farmer." Recorded on April 19, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned this song from her father, John R. Hart, an old singing-school master of Dooly County, Georgia.

There was a farmer lived in our town,
A farmer we knew, we knew full well;
He had one daughter most beauty bright,
And on that daughter takened a great desire.

He sent her away, yes, forty long miles,
To her uncle's house with a discontent;
Yes, forty long miles, and did he send;
To her uncle's house with a discontent.

As she was setting on her bedside,
A quiet loosening at her gown,
She heard a deep and mourning sound;
"Unloose them bands," says the deepest wound.

She knew her father's horse so well,
Her mother's saddle and her safeguard, too;
She dressed herself in the array she died,
For to ride along as her heart's desire.

As she was riding all alone,
He made his moans that his head did ache;
A handkerchief she out her pulled,
And tied around her heavy brow.

As they was riding all alone,
As riding as hard as hard wind could blow,
A-kissing of his cold clay lips,
Saying, "Yes, my dear, you're as cold as clay."

"Go in, go in, and go to bed,
And I will see your horse well fed;
Go in, go in, and go to bed,
And I will see your horse well fed."

The old man cried, "Who's at my door?"
"It is your daughter, Father," she replied;
"It is your daughter, Father," she replied.
"And did you send my love for me?"

This old man knowing he's been so long twelve months dead,
Till it made the hair rise upon his head.
So early next morning this old man rose,
Straightway to the grave, the grave to undo.

He dug, he dug, full thirty feet deep,
He dug, he dug till he found a handkerchief.
He had been so long twelve months dead,
But the handkerchief was around his head.

JOHNNY DOYLE

(Archive 976-A1)

In the Florida collection there are two variants of "Johnny Doyle," which Miss Flanders (*NGMS*, p. 250) has identified as a secondary form of Child 239, "Lord Salton and Auchanachie." The B variant, not given here, adds evidence of the kinship, especially in the bursting of the lady's stays. The use of the word "pilgrim" in Stanza 3 is interesting linguistically. It may be given one 18th century interpretation which defines "pilgrim" as an appendage on a woman's bonnet, or more than likely it is a corruption of either "pillion" or "pelerin", the latter being a doublet of "pilgrim."

For other American texts and tunes, see Sharp, II, p. 27; Eddy, pp. 187-188; *JAFL*, XXXIX, 121; XLIV, 93-94; Hudson, pp. 159-160; Scarborough, *SC*, pp. 248-250; Flanders, Ballard, Brown, and Barry, pp. 248-250; O'Connor, p. 16.

"Johnny Dyles." Recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song from her father, John R. Hart, of Dooly County, Georgia.

Just as it did happen one Saturday night
Me and my poor lover was about to step aside;
My waiting maid was standing so plain as she saw;
She steps up to my mother and told upon me.

My mother, she called me and the room was so high,
Where none could scarcely see me or bless you, you could lie.
She bundled up my clothing, she bid me begone,
So slowly and so slyly was I left alone.

"Seven long years I did serve under the king,
 Before I could turn to my native home again.
 Her mother saw me coming, and she wrung her hands
 and cried,
 Saying, "My daughter loved you dearly, and for your
 sake she died,
 And for your sake she died,"
 Saying, "My daughter loved you dearly, and for your
 sake she died."

Her mother and father come to love one another so,
 They looked to the band to keep her so secure,

Till they never got the sight of my lover any more,
 Of my lover any more,
 Till they never got the sight of my lover any more.

I called for a chair for to seat myself upon,
 A pen and ink for to write her name down,
 Saying, "Oh, oh, oh, it's coarse to complain,
 For I'll never get the sight of my love any more,
 Of my love any more,
 For I'll never get the sight of my love any more."

PRETTY FAIR MAID

(Archive 954-A5)

In Florida there have been recovered fourteen variants of this traditional English folksong, which is widely found in America. For references to texts and tunes, see Cox, pp. 316-318; Sharp, II, 70; Eddy, 152-153; Hudson, pp. 150-151; Kincaid, p. 34; Sandburg, p. 68; Scarborough, SC, pp. 260-263, 423; Smith, pp. 162-163; *JAF*, XXII, 67; XXIX, 201-202; *PFLST*, VI, 194-195; X, 155-156; Cambiaire, pp. 64-65; Shearin and Combs, p. 27; Wyman and Brockway, p. 88; Thomas, pp. 104-105; Fuson, p. 77; Henry, *FSSH*, p. 201-203; Belden, pp. 148-151.

"Pretty Fair Miss." Recorded on April 19, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned this song in Adel, Georgia, but has lived in Florida for sixty-three years.

A pretty fair miss, out in her garden,
 And a brave young soldier was passing by;
 He stepped up to her and thus addressed her,
 Saying, "Pretty fair miss, will you marry me?"

"Oh, no, kind worthy man of honor,
 A man of honor you may be,
 How can you 'pose upon a lady?
 Or would you want your bride to be?"

"My true love's gone all in the army,
 Been gone seven years or more to sea;
 And if he's gone seven years more longer,
 No man on earth can marry me."

"Oh, suppose your true love he is drowned
 Or on some battleground he's slain,
 Or perhaps he's took some fair girl and married,
 And you'll never see his face again?"

"If he's drowned, I hope he's happy,
 Or on some battleground is slain,
 Or if he took some fair girl and married,
 I'll love the girl that married him."

He put his hand all in his pocket,
 His fingers big and slim and small,
 He showed her the ring she'd once given to him,
 And straight before him she did fall.

He picked her up all in his arums;
 His kisses give her one, two, three,
 Saying, "Will you marry a single soldier
 Just lately returned for to marry thee?"

"O, don't you remember the promise I give you
 Just before I went away;
 And if you'd been gone a year longer,
 No man on earth could have married me."

They joined their right hands together
 And on to the churchyard did they go;
 And there they were married to each other,
 It was whether their parents were willing or no.

WILLIAM HALL
 (Archive 992-A2)

A probable derivative of an English broadside, though not as yet definitely identified as such. For American texts and references, see Sharp, II, 239-242; Scarborough, SC, pp. 269-270; Cox, pp. 326-327; Wyman and Brockway, pp. 100-102; Henry, *FSSH*, 180-181; Shearin, *BBM*, pp. 322-323; Hudson, pp. 154-155; Pound, pp. 71-72; Belden, pp. 156-160.

"My Pretty Fair Damsel." Recorded on April 27, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned this song from her father, John R. Hart, of Dooly County, Georgia. The use of "scrimas" for *screams* in Stanza 4 is probably an example of the linguistic phenomenon of dissimilation at work.

"Cheer up, cheer up, my pretty fair damsel,
And won't you fancy me?"
"My fancy's on the best young soldier,
Who's just forsted across the sea."

"O, describe him to me, my pretty fair damsel,
O, describe him unto me."
"His hair is black and he wears it plaited,
All on his right hand a diamond ring."

"It's him, and I do know him;
His name is William Hall.
I saw a cannon ball shot through him,
O Doan's death he did fall."

She screamed such scrimes, such lamentation,
"Oh, good glass, what shall I do?
I'm ruined now and undone forever;
My poor heart shall break, I know."

.
"I'll prove to you these false stories;
Here is the ring that you gave me."

They joined their right hands together,
And to the church they did go,
And there they were married to each other
Whether their parents were willing or no.

THE DROWSY SLEEPER

(Archive 981-A3)

This is a widely distributed song, found not only in Florida but in all sections of the country. It belongs to one of three types of songs sung at the night visit. (See Baskerville, *PMLA*, XXXVI, 565-614.)

For other texts and references, see Cox, pp. 348-349; Mackenzie, pp. 55-56; Eddy, pp. 92-95; Greenleaf and Mansfield, pp. 151-153; Sturgis and Hughes, pp. 30-32; Henry, *FSSH*, p. 190; *JAFL*, XX, 260; XXIX, 200; XXX, 338; XXXV, 356; XLV, 55; Pound, p. 51; Scarborough, *SC*, pp. 139-142; Sharp, I, 358-364, which is good for citations to English stall prints and recordings from the English oral tradition; Brewster, pp. 170-174.

"Drowsy Sleepers." Recorded on April 19, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song from her father, John R. Hart, of Dooley County, Georgia.

"It's wake, it's wake, you drowsy sleepers;
It's wake, it's wake, it's almost day.
How can you sleep, you cruel creature,
Whilst your true love is a-going away?"

"Go, pray, love, and ask your father,
And ask him if you can't now marry me.
And if he say 'no,' pray, love, come and tell me,
And I'll go away and not bother thee."

"My old father's in the upper chamber,
A-taking of his natural rest,
And in his right hand holds a weapon
To kill the man that I love best."

"Go, pray, love, and ask your mother
If you now can't marry me;
And if she says 'no,' pray, love, come and tell me,
And I'll go away and not bother thee."

"My mother's up in the upper chamber,
A-taking of her natural rest;
In her right hand she holds a letter
To read to girls that's in distress."

"I'll go away to some silent meadows,
And there I'll spend my days and years;
My eats shall be with the griefs and sorrow,
My drinks shall be of the briny tear."

JACKIE FRAZIER

(Archive 981-B)

For references to English versions from which this is derivative, see Cox, pp. 330-333. For references to English and American texts and tunes, see *JAF*, XII, p. 249; XX, 269; XXV, p. 9; XXXV, 377; XLV, 76; XLVI, 38; Hudson, pp. 147-148; Scarborough, SC, pp. 203-210; Sharp, I, 385-395; Gardner and Chickering, pp. 165-166; Eddy, pp. 106-113; *PTFLS*, X, 151; Wyman and Brockway, p. 38; Henry, *FSSH*, p. 208; Brewster, pp. 206-210.

"The Old Rich Merchman." Recorded April 19, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida. This song, which she has sung all her life, was learned from her father in Dooly County, Georgia. Her lack of education will explain several interesting peculiarities of diction which are noticeable here. In Stanza 1 "merchman" represents an echthipsis of *merchant man*; Stanza 3 makes use of "combine," a folk confusion for *confine*; in Stanza 4 "histed" for *hoisted* represents an eighteenth century pronunciation of the new English diphthong *oi*; the "flags of angry" in Stanza 14 is unintelligible; "physicianer" for *physician* in Stanza 16 is a rare use of the word.

There was an old rich merchman,
In London he did dwell.
He had one only daughter.
The truth to you I'll tell,
O, the truth to you I'll tell.

She had sweethearts aplenty
To court her day and night,
But there's none but Jackie Frazier
Could gain her heart's delight,
O, could gain her heart's delight.

"Oh, Daughter, dearest Daughter,
My voice you must surely mind,
Or else I'll force you in a dungeon
Where your body I will combine,
O, your body I will combine."

"Oh, Father, dearest Father,
Your voice I'll surely mind,
For there's none but Jackie Frazier
Shall ever bother my mind,
O, shall ever bother my mind."

The waiting maid was standing
To let the old man know
That Mary was in readiness
With her darling Jack to go,
O, with her darling Jack to go.

The old man flew into a passion,
And to the captain did say,
"I give you forty guineas
If you'll take Jack far away,
O, if you'll take Jack far away."

Now Jackie's gone a-sailing
Across the deep blue sea;
Now Jackie's gone a-sailing
To the wars of Germanie,
O, to the wars of Germanie.

Now Mary has gained her liberty
And money at her command.
She set a resolution:
She'd view some foreign land,
O, she'd view some foreign land.

She stepped into some tailor's shop
To dress in lingerie,
And bargained with the captain
To take her across the sea,
O, to take her across the sea.

"Your waist is too slender;
Your fingers are too small;
Your cheeks are too red and rosy
To face the cannon balls,
O, to face the cannon balls."

"My waist is none too slender;
My fingers none too small;
My cheeks is none too red and rosy
To face the cannon balls,
O, to face the cannon balls."

"It's just before you come on board
Your name I'd like to know."
She smiles and in her countenance,
"My name is Dee Monroe,
O, my name is Dee Monroe."

Now Mary's gone a-sailing
Across the deep blue sea;
Now Mary's gone a-sailing
To the wars of Germainie,
O, to the wars of Germanie.

They histed the flags of angry;
They histed up their sails.
Now Mary's safely landed
On a sweet and a pleasant gale,
O, on a sweet and a pleasant gale.

And when the battle was over,
Mary taken her circle around
Among the dead and wounded,
Till her darling Jack she found,
O, till her darling Jack she found.

She picked him up all in her arms
And to some town did go,
And bargained with the physicianer
To heal Jack's bleeding wounds,
O, to heal Jack's bleeding wounds.

Now Jackie is reviving,
And all to his surprise
To see his darling over him
With tears all in her eyes,
O, with tears all in her eyes.

Now then this couple are married,
How meekly they do agree.
Now then this couple are married,
And why not you and me?
O, and why not you and me?

And now this couple are married,
And money at their command,
They've set a resolution
To view their native land,
O, to view their native land.

The old man was standing
To welcome home his brave.
"Here's my humble fortune;
My children is all I crave,
O, my children is all I crave."

THE NIGHTINGALE

(Archive 956-A3)

This piece, with a reverdi opening, is a well-known traditional song of England. Belden in his headnote, p. 239, has assigned to it an imposing literary ancestry. For references to English and American texts, see Sharp, II, pp. 192-194 (note, No. 145, p. 393); Sandburg, p. 136; Belden, pp. 239-244; Eddy, pp. 230-231; Cambiaire, p. 92; Wyman and Brockway, pp. 68-71.

"The Walls of Jericho." Recorded March 17, 1939, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song from her father, Mr. John R. Hart, an old singing-school master of Dooley County, Georgia.

One morning, one morning, one morning in May,
I met a fair couple a-making their way;
A one was a lady, a lady so fair;
The other a soldier a brave bannetier.

With bowing and scraping, they kept on together,
And out of his knapsack he drew a fine fiddle;
He tuned up his fiddle to the highest of string,
He played it all over and over again.

. . . let's go to the spring
 To see the waters flowing; the nightingales they sing."
 "O no," said the soldier, "I have a love here;
 The finest one your eye ever did see."

Sweet river, sweet river, we know you're not dry,
 And I never drink nothing till I know they're not . . .
 Wake you Betsy, wake you Betsy, it's.

PRETTY PEGGY O

(Archive 955-A1)

A fragment of an old English broadside, "Pretty Peggy of Derby," published by Pitts. Other English versions listed by Sharp, II, 387, are Grieg's *Folksong of the Northeast*, I, 15; Ford's *Vagabond Songs and Ballads of Scotland*, p. 121; Christie's *Traditional Ballad Airs*, I, 276. For other American versions, see Sharp, II, 59-61; Hudson, pp. 65-166; Belden, p. 169; Shearin, *BBCM*, p. 326; *JAFL*, XLIX, pp. 256-267.

"Pretty Mollie O." Recorded on March 18, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song from her father in Dooly County, Georgia.

O Pretty Mollie, O, pretty Mollie, O,
 Gone stepping down the stairs,
 Brushing back her yellow hair,
 And she go in the name of Pretty Mollie O.

O Pretty Mollie, O, pretty Mollie, O,
 Come stepping down the stairs,
 Brushing back her yellow hair,
 And she go in the name of Pretty Mollie O.

LITTLE SPARROW

(Archive 986-A4)

A song with the conventional "Come All Ye" opening common to many Irish songs and folk hymns. Sharp includes this piece in his *Folksongs of English Origin*, First Series, pp. 88. Five variants have been reported in Florida.

For other American versions, see Cox, pp. 419-421; Wyman and Brockway, p. 55; *JAFL*, XXIX, 184; XLIV, 101-102; Campbell and Sharp, pp. 220-222; Hudson, pp. 151, 167; Sharp, II, 136; Henry, *FSSH*, 259-260; Belden, pp. 477-478; McGill, p. 23; Shearin and Combs, p. 26; Thomas, p. 82; Cambiaire, p. 61; Brewster, p. 328.

"Come All You Fair and Pretty Ladies." This text was taken down from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song from her father, John R. Hart, of Dooly County, Georgia, when she was a young girl living near Adel, Georgia.

Come all you fair and pretty ladies;
Take warning how you love young men.
They'll shine like a flower on some summer's morning;
They'll shine so bright, but they'll soon decay.

They'll tell to you some love-like story;
They'll tell you that they love you well;
But the way they'll go and court another,
And say their love is not for you.

I wish I were some little swallow,
And one of those had wings to fly,
Wherever you might go that I might follow,
And in his breast that I might flutter.

I am not no little swallow,
Nor none of those have wings to fly.
I'll stay down here and sleep and slumber,
And sing and pass my time away.

THE BOATSMAN AND THE CHEST

(Archive 957-B2)

This bit of Rabelaisian humor has been found in North Carolina (Sharp, I, 338-39), Georgia (Henry, *FSSH*, pp. 191-192), Kentucky (Sharp, I, 339-340), Nova Scotia (Greenleaf and Mansfield, pp. 112-113), Michigan (Gardner and Chickering, p. 482), and Ohio (Eddy, pp. 143-145). Florida is represented by this single variant that comes from Mrs. Griffin. This song bears resemblance to similar situations in Boccaccio's *Decameron* (Novel 10, Fourth Day) and also the laundry basket episode in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act IV, Scene 2.

"The Tailor and the Sailor." Recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song as a girl in Georgia. Mrs. Griffin, untouched by the taboos of Victorianism, took great delight in recording this song. She sang it over several times to make certain that it was just right.

There was a little tailor went to London for to dwell;
The sailor had a wife and the tailor loved her well.

Refrain:

Tummy row dow dow, tummy row dow dee, tummy row dow dow,
dow dee.

The sailor's wife was a-walking of the street,
"Now," said the tailor, "is a chance for us to meet."

"My husband's gone to sail upon the sea,
And tonight you must come to stay with me."

They hadn't been together an hour or more,
Till she heard her husband a-knocking at the door.

"There sits my chest by my bedside,
And in that chest yourself you can hide."

He jumped in the chest as limber as a deer;
"My dear woman, there's nothing for to fear."

She went downstairs and opened up the door;
There stood her husband and several others more.

"I've not come to disturb or rob you of your rest;
I'm going off a-sailing, and I've come for my chest."

Up stepped the boatmen, big and strong;
They picked up the chest and carried it right along.

When they got half way of the town,
The tailor made the sweat come a-rolling down.

Up stepped the captain and several others more;
No one but the captain the chest could undo.

He opened up the chest before them all,
And there lay the tailor like a pig in a stall.

"Now I've got you, I'll throw you in the sea;
I'll not leave you here to cut your capers on me."

THE THREE BUTCHERS

(Archive 981-A1)

A derivative of a seventeenth-century broadside, a discussion of which, with references, can be found in Cox, p. 302. For American versions, see Campbell and Sharp, p. 330; Mackenzie, pp. 82-86. For identification of this song and two excellent references, I am indebted to Professor George Lyman Kittredge, who, in communication with Professor A. P. Hudson, cited *The Roxburghe Ballads*, VII, 59-63, and *Adventure Magazine* (April 23, 1926), pp. 189-190.

"Johnson and Dixie." Recorded on April 19, 1937, by John A. Lomax and me from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song as a girl from her father, John R. Ross Hart, of Dooly County, Georgia.

Johnson and Dixie, all on a holiday,
Rode 'round the mountains ten thousand miles away.
Dixie said to Johnson, "I heard a woman cry."
Johnson, being a kind-hearted man, came a-riding by.
"O woman, O woman, O what are you doing down here?"
"Seven old robbers have left me here in chains."

Johnson, being a kind-hearted man,
 He threw his coat around and takened her up behind,
 And he rode through a lane about five miles wide,
 And there stood seven old robbers each side by side,
 The fight began at six o'clock and lasted with the sun;
 They killed the six old robbers and the seventh one did run.

Johnson, being tired and worried, lay down to take a rest,
 That cruel old woman, she stabbed him in the breast,
 Saying, "Cruel woman, cruel woman, see what you've done;
 You killed the bravest soldier that ever fired a gun."
 She run her hand all through her hair, and hung her head
 and cried.

THE CARRION CROW

(Archive 954-A1)

Attaching to this nursery song is considerable significance if one concurs in Bell's interpretation of it as a political satire on the Restoration court (see p. 202 of *Ancient, Poems, Ballads of the Peasantry of England*) and Brewster's subsequent clever interpretation of "The Carrion Crow" as a political allegory, dating back to the same period. Belden, p. 270, has, however, called attention to the Halliwell-Phillips citation of a manuscript version dating from the time of Charles I. He lists a stall print and also references to the song in present-day English and American folk tradition. See also *PTFLS*, VI, 230-231; Niles, pp. 18-19; Brewster, pp. 290-292; Mackenzie, *BSSNS*, p. 375; Linscott, pp. 185-186; *JAFL*, I, 136.

"The Old Sow's in the Corner." Recorded on March 19, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who said she learned "this piece of foolishness" from her father, John R. Hart, of Dooly County, Georgia, when she was a "mite of a girl."

The old sow's in the corner putting down bread;
 The pig's out-doors a-combing their heads.

Refrain

Chi flay gilden gliden
 Chi flay gildaw gay
 Up jump uppy and he crawled away
 To me ling long ling long chi yaw may.

The dog's in the pond a-hollering up frogs;
 Frog's in the woods a-skinning up logs.

I shot the oak and I missed the pine,
 And I pressed that gourd neck to the vine.

I drugged that old sow through the house,
And there I had backbones, chittlings, and souse.

MOLLY BAUN

(Archive 954-B2)

Professor Kittredge, in *JAFL*, XXX, 359, assigns considerable antiquity to this song, which is certainly of early eighteenth century vintage or perhaps older. For other references to American variants, see Sharp, I, 328-332; Pound, pp. 78-79; Hudson, pp. 145-146; Cox, pp. 339-341; Randolph, pp. 174-175; Scarborough, *SC*, pp. 116-117; Gardner and Chickering, pp. 66-68.

"Jimmy Ransom." Recorded on March 19, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin (née Georgia Celia Civility Hart), who learned the song from her father, John R. Hart, a music teacher of the old singing-school near Adel, Georgia. "My father," she said, "had a melodeon on which he played these songs."

Jimmy Ransom walked out at the setting of the sun,
Out under a bower a shower to shun;
Jimmy Ransom went with Polly, just as it was dark,
And, ho, ho, ho, he did not miss his mark.

Jimmy Ransom ran to her with a gun in his hand,
And he brushed her in his arms till he found that she
was dead;
She's the beautifulest girl hit ever I saw,
And, ho, ho, ho, ho, I can die for my dear.

Jimmy Ransom run home with the gun in his hand
Saying, "Father, dear Father, I've shot Polly Vann;
She was the beautifulest girl hit ever I saw,
And, ho, ho, ho, ho, I can die for my dear."

In stepped an old man with his head all so gray,
Saying, "Jimmy, dear Jimmy, don't you go away;
Stay in your own country till your trial comes on,
And you never shall be hanged for the crime that you've
done."

In a day or so at her uncle's she appeared,
Saying, "Uncle, dear Uncle, Jimmy Ransom is clear,
I had my apron pinned around me till they thought that
a sworn,
And ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, it was me poor Polly Vann."

THE JOLLY IRISHMAN

(Archive 955-B2)

"The Jolly Irishman." Recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida. She learned the song from her father, who was born and

reared and learned the song in Washington County, Georgia, where all his people were reared.

O Mother, O Mother! I'll tell you if I can,
I rambled this world over with my jolly Irishman.
O, I rambled and I jangled, and I rambled over town,
No one could I find but my jolly Irishman.

O Mother, O Mother! I'll tell you if I can,
I rambled the world over with my jolly Irishman.
Oh, he hugged her and he kissed her, and he held her by the
hand,
And he made her tell her mother that she loved her little
Irishman.

O Mother, O Mother! I'll tell you if I can,
I rambled the world over with my jolly Irishman.
O he hugged me and he kissed me, and he held me by the hand,
And I'm here to tell you, Mother, that I love my Irishman.

THE NEW JERUSALEM

(Archive 976-A2)

This white spiritual patterns very closely the version of "Journey Home" in *Zion's Harp*, p. 87.

Recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song as a girl in Adel, Georgia, from a friend in that city.

I am on my journey home;
I am on my journey home
To the new Jerusalem.
I am on my journey home
To the new Jerusalem;
So fare you well;
So fare you well;
So fare you well;
I am going home.

MINISTER'S FAREWELL

(Archive 976-A3)

In many rural communities even today the occasion of a minister's leaving his church for another is a time of high emotional expression. Some of these ministers' farewells impressed themselves indelibly upon me as a boy. I can see them now: the preacher delivers a heart-rending sermon in which he suffers anguish of soul; then at the close of the sermon the organist starts playing "God Be With You Till We Meet Again," and the congregation file past and shake hands with the departing minister. Our elders seemed to be uplifted spiritually by the service; we youngsters dreaded to see a new minister come,

for we knew some day he would have to leave. This white spiritual is a "minister's farewell" song and is thus entitled in *The Southern Harmony*, p. 14. See also *The Sacred Harp*, 4th edition, p. 89.

"Dear Friends Farewell." Recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned this song as a girl from her father, an old singing-school teacher in Dooly County, Georgia.

Dear friends farewell, how do you tell,
Since you and I must part?
I am going away and here you stay,
But still we are joined in heart.

Your love to me has been most free,
Your conversation sweet.
How can I bear to journey where
With you I cannot meet?

I am going away and here you stay,
But still we are joined in heart.

MY MULE

(Archive 957-A2)

"My Mule" is, no doubt, a vaudeville number of the type popular at the turn of this century. Though it has thus far eluded identification and though it appears in only one version, I do not hold it suspect, for it has come from the repertory of a communicant whose stock of sixty-odd songs are all, without a single exception, genuine folksongs. It is included here because of its characteristic type of imaginative humor popular with the people who live close to the soil.

This song was recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida. She learned it from her father, an old singing-school teacher of Dooly County, Georgia.

The other day I had some cash,
And then I thought I'd cut a dash;
I went to a man who'd mules to sell;
I bought me one that pleased me well.

Refrain

Sing hi fal da, sing hi fal day;
Sing hi fal diddle dal day.

I got on the mule and the way I did go;
He throwed me down, he dirtied my clothes.
He throwed me down, he dirtied my clothes;
He broke my back, and he mashed my nose.

I got right up and it made me mad,
To think my mule would serve me so bad;
I binged him, I banged him, I had him to go;
He outran his shadow a mile or so.

We run on till we came to the sea,
And there I thought both drowned we'd be;
My mule didn't seemed to be drowned at all;
He takened one sup, and he swallowed it all.

He kicked up his heels, and the way he did fly;
He kicked up his heels, and the way he did fly;
He kicked up his heels, and the way he did fly;
He lodged me up oh in the sky.

Gitting up there was easy enough,
But how to git down looked mighty tough;
I saw a rainbow reaching the ground;
I greased my breeches and so I slipped down.

And now I've sung my song most through,
And every word of hit are true;
And now I sung my mule both steam and fire,
And if you don't believe me, you can go and inquire.

THE FROG'S COURTSHIP

(Archive 956-A1)

There are twelve variants of this old English nursery song recorded from oral tradition in Florida, two of which are Mrs. Griffin's. "The Froggie Came to the Mill Door" was one of the songs in Wedderburn's *Complaynt of Scotland*, 1548. On November 21, 1580, a license was granted to E. White by the Stationer's Company for a "ballad of a most strange wedding of the froggie and the mouse," as was pointed out by Professor Hyder E. Rollins in his *Analytical Index*. See also Professor Kittredge's presentation of the song's history in *JAFL*, XXXV, 394-399.

For other American versions, see Sharp, II, 312; Cox, 471-472; Gordon, pp. 86-88; Shoemaker, p. 268; Odum and Johnson, *NWS*, p. 187; Hudson, pp. 282-283; Lomax, *ABS*, pp. 310-313; Sturgis and Hughes, pp. 18-21; Richardson, pp. 98-99; McGill, pp. 86-93; Chase, pp. 7-9; *JAFL*, XXXIII, 98; XXXV, 394-399; XLI, 574; XLII, 298-299; Henry, *FSSH*, 392-393; Scarborough, *SC*, pp. 247-248; Thomas, pp. 154-155; Belden, 494-499; Brewster, pp. 226-238; Linscott, pp. 199-202; Botkin, p. 66.

A

"Frog Went A-Courtin'." Recorded on March 18, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song as a girl in Adel, Georgia, from a friend living there.

There was a frog lived in the well,
 Kitty alone, Kitty alone;
 There was a frog lived in the well,
 Kitty alone and I;
 There was a frog lived in the well,
 Married a mouse lived in the mill,
 Kitty alone, Froggie Maderio.

Uncle Rat came galloping home,
 Who's been here since I've been gone?

A gentleman he is so fair,
 Can't I have him if I can?

B

(Archive 956-A2)

"Kitty Alone." Recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song from her father in Southern Georgia.

Kitty was a frog, lived in a well,
 Kitty alone, Kitty alone;
 There was a frog lived in a well,
 "Kitty alone," said I.
 There was a frog lived in a well;
 Lady Mouse lived in the mill;
 Kitty alone, frog-a ma-dairy,
 Kitty alone, and I.

Frog he jumped from the bottom of the well,
 Swore, by God, he's just from Hell.

Frog he went to Lady Mouse's door,
 Saying, "Will you marry me, yes or no?"

Uncle Rat came galloping home,
 Saying, "Who's been here since I've been gone?"

"A young man with a red shirt on
 Has been here since you've been gone."

"O where will the wedding supper be?"
 "Way down yonder in a hollow tree."

"What will the wedding supper be?"
 "Three fried hams and a skillet of beef."

First come in was a bee,
 Said he'd play a tune for me.

Next came in it was a flea,
Said he'd dance a jig for me.

Next came in it was a cat,
Slapped Lady Mouse and grabbed the rat.

Frog he hopped back to his well,
Found it was Heaven instead of Hell.

That is what became of the three;
You want it sung any more, come to me.

That is all I have to say;
For that was the end of the wedding day.

There is a saddle and bridle upon the shelf;
If you want any more, you can sing it yourself.

THERE WAS AN OLD OWL

(Archive 978-A2)

The wise old owl has been the subject material for folk imagination to work with not only in song but in folktale and proverb lore. This song may be a third or fourth cousin to "The Bird Song" listed in Sharp, II, p. 304. The metre is suggestive of a fiddle tune.

Recorded on April 27, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned it from her father, an old singing-school master of Dooly County, Georgia. He was originally from Washington County, Georgia.

There was an old owl, setting in an oak;
He said to me, he'd cut me a coat,
But he nodded his head and winked his eye.

Refrain

Sing hi fal dal, diddle dal day;
Sing fal dal de day.

Oh, the owl sit up with his head all so gray;
He sit up all night, and he slept next day;
The pond so muddy and the creek so dry,
If it weren't for the pretty girls, I'd die.

I sent the red bird to the crow,
Saying, "Will you have me, or no?"
"Oh, there's too many pretty girls for you
That I can say a refuse to you."

JAWBONE

(Archive 962-A1)

This fiddle tune was popular in central Florida and southern Georgia during the late nineties and the first decade of this century, so Mrs. Griffin, the singer, reports. Scarborough, *TNFS*, pp. 103-104, gives a snatch of this song used as a negro dance song.

Recorded with John Lomax on April 17, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song in Newberry.

Allers when I'm gone from home
The gals want me to sing jawbone;
The jawbone walked and the jawbone talked;
The jawbone eat with a knife and fork.

O, the hawk and the buzzard went to the log;
The hawk came back with a broken jaw;
The jawbone broke and the marrow flew
O, higher'n my head and higher, too.

O, it's my cold feet and your cold hands.
Your belly aches and my

.
.³

I WANT SOME MEAT

(Archive 992-B4)

This fiddle tune, popular in southern Georgia and central Florida in the 1890's and the early 1900's, illustrates the ability of the folk to sense amusement in situations which to the more sophisticated are inane.

Recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, in April, 1937, who learned the song from her father, John R. Hart, of Dooly County, Georgia, when she was "young and could dance the pigeons off the roost."

I want some meat and I want some bread;
The baby got choked on the gander's head.
So roll on, I'll soon be there;
Roll on, I'll come by and by.

BACON IN THE SMOKE HOUSE

(Archive 955-A5)

A fiddle tune popular in central Florida and southern Georgia during the late 1890's and early 1900's.

Recorded March 18, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of New-

* Mrs. Griffin would not sing the rest because it was "too dirty," she said.

berry, Florida, who learned the tune in Georgia when she was a little girl. Forbidden to use her father's Jacobus Stainer violin, she would take it surreptitiously and play such tunes as these for her own amusement during her father's absence.

Bacon in the smoke house, barrel full of lard,
Milk in the dairy, butter on the board,
Coffee in the little bag, sugar in the gourd,
And the way to git it out is to dash the gourd about,
And the way to git it out is to dash the gourd about.

PRETTIEST LITTLE GAL IN THE COUNTY, O

(Archive 955-A3)

A fiddle tune popular in central Florida and southern Georgia shortly after the Civil War.

Recorded by Lomax and me in April, 1936, from the singing of Mrs. Griffin, who learned this song as a girl in southern Georgia near Adel. She knows a number of fiddle tunes. Her experience as dancer with a traveling troupe and her musical propensity, which she inherited from her father, account for her large repertory of dance songs.

Prettiest little gal in the county, O,
Dressed in silk and calico;
And if she marries let her go,
Plenty more in the county, O.
Prettiest little gal in the county, O;
Mammy and daddy both say so;
And if she marries let her go,
Plenty more in the county, O.

JACK BOY

(Archive 978-B4)

A fiddle tune, popular in Florida, especially in the 1890's.

Recorded in April, 1936, with John Lomax, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who, in speaking of this song, said, "Ma used to tell me not to sing those dirty songs, but Pa would sing them, and I told Ma that what's good for Pa was good for me, and I'd sing them anyway."

You can lie at my side, Jack boy, Jack boy;
You can lie at my side, your heart's loving joy.
And every day the devil poked the door side, so sigh so,
And every day the devil poked the door side, so sigh so.

WAKE UP, JACOB

(Archive 978-B3)

Recorded on April 27, 1936, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who has been especially fond of fiddle music and dancing all her

life. Though she is over eighty years of age [1944], she still gets out her old violin and plays a tune whenever visitors call or when the Orange Grove String Band, a local radio station fiddlers' band, gives its program on Saturday and Monday nights. This love of song and dance she inherited from her father, who was an old singing-school master. He inherited the Jacobus Stainer violin which Mrs. Griffin possesses from her great-grandfather. In commenting on her use of her father's fiddle, she said, "You know, Pa didn't want me to play that fiddle, but I was just so full of that music I just had to play that fiddle. I'd steal it while Pa was gone turkey hunting and I'd go down to the old stump in the hammock and get up on it and play until Pa would come back from his hunt. When I'd see him coming down the road, I'd run home and put the fiddle up before he'd get there."

Wake up, Jacob, and kindle up a light;
See your old daddy in a pole-cat fight.
There are two things to make a man poor:
Going to a ball and loving of a woman.

I WANT TO GO BACK TO GEORGIA

(Archive 992-B3)

This fiddle tune reflects the nostalgia which a number of Georgia immigrants experienced when they moved to Florida in the middle of the last century. For the portion of the chorus making use of the "cherry-tree" commonplace, see Sharp, II, 377. This song was popular at country breakdowns in Florida during the last quarter of the 19th century.

Recorded on April 18, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, where she learned the song from a girl friend.

The coon he takes a ringy tail;
Oh, the possum hates a slick un;
O, the coon he eats my new ground corn,
And the possum catches chicken.

Chorus

I want to go back to Georgia,
And I want to go back to Georgia.
The higher you'll climb the cherry tree;
The riper is the berry.
The more you court that pretty little gal,
The sooner she will marry.

I wouldn't have you to save your life,
Because you're my cousin,
For I can get aplenty more,
For eighteen cents a dozen.

WHEN I WAS A RICH MAN

(Archive 955-A6)

A fiddle tune that is used as a medium for mild social protest.

Recorded from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, on April 18, 1936. She learned the song as a girl in southern Georgia. Her stock of fiddle tunes she learned from her father, an old singing-school master of Dooly County, Georgia.

When I was a rich man, I wore my silk and satin;
But now I am a poor man, I wear my cotton bagging.
When I was a rich lady, I had a rich lady's baby;
But now I am a negro, damn a negro baby!

BEN BUTLER, OR, THE YANKEE SOLDIER

(Archive 955-A4)

A fiddle tune of Civil War vintage. It was popular in central Florida and southern Georgia in the 1890's and early 1900's.

Communicated by Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida.

Facts, hoorah for the truth I've told you;
Blow your fife and beat your drum;
Lock up your spoons and hide out your devils;
Clear it away, Ben Butler's come.

SILVER DAGGER

(Archive 978-B2)

In most places where this song is found it bears the name "The Silver Dagger." It has had widespread folk currency, especially in the South and West. The Florida variant has the conventional situations found in other reported variants. For references to texts, see Cox, pp. 350-352; Sharp, II, 229-230; Gardner and Chickering, pp. 89-90; Belden, pp. 123-126; Eddy, pp. 227-230; Brewster, pp. 211-214; McGill, pp. 71-72; Thomas, pp. 110-111; Pound, pp. 121-124; *JAF*, XX, 267; XXX, 338, 361-365; XXXV, 374; XLIX, 211-213.

"Come Set You Down." Recorded by John A. Lomax and me on April 27, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida.

Come set you down and give attention,
To those few lines I'm going to write,
To this young man who I make mention,
Just lately courted a beauty bright.

He swore, he swore, they ofttimes said,
There never could be any other false lover,

.
.

She went on down to some shady bower,
Where she thought she'd bid all troubles adieu;
She went on down by the side of the river,
And there she wept under a willow tree.

She pulled out her silver dagger,
And pierced it to her tender heart;
She walked, she talked, it's as she staggered,
Saying, "O true love, I'm going to rest."

He, being off some distance from her,
He heard a deep and mournful voice;
He run, he run, like one distracted,
Saying, "O true love, I've been quite lost."

Then two pretty eyes like stars she opened,

.
Saying, "O true love, I'm going to rest."

He picked up them bloody weapons,
And he pierced it to his tender heart;
Prepare to meet me on menzion,⁴
Where all our love shall be complete.

NAOMI WISE

(Archive 954-A2)

This brutally tragic piece, Mr. Bascom Lunsford holds in a note in *Thirty and One Songs from the Southern Mountains*, p. 28, was occasioned by the drowning of Naomi Wise in 1808 by her sweetheart Jonathan Lewis, of Deep River, North Carolina. The subsequent popularity of the song in the South and the retention of "Naomi Wise" in the title and the name of the villain "Lewis" in at least one version (Belden B, p. 323) seem to substantiate Lunsford's contention; moreover, one of the Florida variants, not here presented, contains all the place names and the dramatis personae mentioned by Lunsford in his explanation of the history of this song.

For references to other American variants, see Sharp, II, 145-147; Pound, pp. 119-120; Hudson, pp. 187-188; Randolph, pp. 201-203; Henry, *FSSA*, pp. 73-75; *FSSH*, 223-227; *JAFL*, XX, 265-267; XLII, 281-282; Belden, pp. 322-324.

"Sweet William." Recorded on March 19, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song from her father, Mr. John R. Hart, of Dooly County, Georgia.

He promised for to meet me
On some big water's side,
Some money to give me
And to make me his bride.

⁴ Probably a corruption of Mount Zion.

"O, William, Sweet William,
Pray tell me your mind."
"My mind is to drown you
And to leave you behind."

"Think of your infant
And spare me my life;
I won't ask for no money,
Nor I won't be your wife."

"I think not on my infant
Not sparing your life;
I won't give you no money,
Nor you shan't be my wife."

I cut her throat fairly,
So you may understand,
And I throwed her into the waters,
Just below the mill dam.

I mounted my fine horse;
I rode him full speed,
But the screams of poor old May
Have followed me home.

"O, Mother, dear Mother,
Pray make my bed down,
For the screams of old May
And dig me my grave."

OLD ALEC BROWN
(Archive 956-B2)

This piece bears many stylistic characteristics of a negro folksong, yet White, Odum and Johnson, Scarborough, Lomax, and others do not cite it. Phrases and expressions in it are familiar in American song: "I'm going away ten thousand miles" is a commonplace; "Look down, look down that lonesome road" is suggestive of "Lonesome Road"; "The only girl that I ever loved has just turned her back on me" is well-known to the singers of "Charlie Brooks."

Recorded by Lomax and me for the Library of Congress. Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, learned this song from a Mollie Christian, Dooly County, Georgia, about sixty years ago.

Old Alex Brown has brought me here,
Lie in jail all my days,
Old Alec Brown has brought me here,
To lie in jail all my days.

True love, true love, my darling child,
What have I done to you?
You've caused me to weep,
Hang down my head and cry.

I've walked this road through rain and snow.
True love, what have I gained?
I've walked this road through rain and snow.
True love, what have I gained?

If you loved me like I love you,
Come lay your hand in mine.
If you loved me like I love you,
No girl would cause to change your mind.

I'm going away ten thousand miles.
I'm going away ten thousand miles or more.
I'm going away ten thousand miles,
And you'll never see me any more.

O, go your way, you scornful girl;
I have no love for thee.
O, go your way, you scornful girl;
I have no love for thee.

You've caused me to weep; you've caused me to moan;
You've caused me to leave my home.
You've caused me to weep; you've caused me to moan;
You've caused me to leave my home.

Look down, look down this lonesome road,
Nowheres to lay my head.
Look down, look down this lonesome road,
Nowheres to lay my head.

The only girl that I've loved
She's turned her back on me.
The only girl that I've loved
She's turned her back on me.

The sun's gone down; the moon has riz,
Nowheres to lay my head.
The sun's gone down; the moon has riz,
Nowheres to lay my head.

BETSY, MY DARLING GIRL

(Archive 956-B1)

Only one version of this song from Florida. Stanzas 2, 3, 5, and 6 have the blood of "The Butcher Boy" in them. Stanza 4 is reminiscent of the songs

of the night visit. The tune is far from the tune commonly used with "The Butcher Boy." That fact leads one to believe that the song must have an existence of its own, although I have been unable to locate it in other collections.

Recorded on March 18, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, who learned the song from her father, an old singing-school master of Dooly County, Georgia.

I'm going up yonder to yonders town,
Where the cannon balls flash round and round,
And there I'll spend my days and years
My weeks, my months, my wretched life.

I called for a chair to seat myself upon,
And a pen and ink to write her name down,
And every line I shed a tear
For Betsy, O Betsy, my darling girl.

So dig my grave both steep and deep,
And marble stones at my head and feet,
And on my breast put a snow white dove
To show to the world I died for love.

Who's at my gate, that darling girl?
Who's at my gate, that darling girl?
Who's at my gate, my own true love?
I love her now until I die.

Come in, my own true love;
Come in, come my darling girl;
Come in, come my own true love,
For I love you now until I die.

O give to me your lily-white hand;
O give to me both your heart and hand.
She gave to me her lily-white hand,
For I love her now until I die.

YONDER COMES A YOUNG MAN

(Archive 960-A3)

For the cherry tree commonplace, see Sharp, II, 377. Recorded by John Lomax and me for the Library of Congress from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida, on April 18, 1937. She learned the song from her father, John R. Hart, of Dooly County, Georgia.

Yonder comes a young man;
O don't he look funny?
Got on his father's roundabout,
And not a cent of money.

The higher he climbed that cherry tree
The riper is the berry;
The more you court that pretty gal
The sooner she'll get married.

Don't court one with two blue eyes;
She's sure to cost too much money.
Go court one with two black eyes;
She'll kiss and call you honey.

BILLY GRIMES

(Archive 960-B1)

Two variants of this song have been recovered in Florida. For additional versions, see Shoemaker, pp. 63-65; Pound, 205-206; Sharp, II, 248; *JAFL*, XXVIII, 173-174; Hudson, pp. 281-282.

Recorded on April 18, 1937, with John Lomax from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida. She is a native of South Georgia, but has been a Floridian for sixty years. She learned this song from her father, who was from Dooly County, Georgia.

"Tomorrow morning I'm sweet sixteen,
And Billy Grimes, a rover,
He popped a question to me, Ma,
And he wants to be my lover.

"Tomorrow morning he tells me, Ma,
He's coming here bright and early
To take a pleasant walk with me
Across the fields of barley."

"O daughter, O daughter, dear,
There is no use in talking,
For you shall not go across the fields
With a Billy Grimes a-walking.

"To think of his presumption, too,
A dirty youth, a rover.
I wonder where your pride has gone
To think of such a lover."

"Old Grimes is dead you know, my Ma.
And Billy is the only
Surviving heir to all that's left
About six thousand yearly.

"And say there is nearly
A good ten thousand and six hundred shirlings,
And what can your objection be,
If Billy loves me dearly?"

"O daughter, daughter, O daughter, dear,
I did not hear you clearly,
And Billy is a clever lad,
And no doubt loves you dearly.

"Remember well tomorrow morning
To be up bright and early
To take a pleasant walk with him
Across the fields of barley."

"Old Grimes is dead you know, my Ma.
And Billy is the only
Surviving heir to Old Grimes' estate,
About six thousand nearly.

"Surviving hearts to all that's left,
And that you see, is nearly,
A good six thousand dollars, Ma,
About six hundred yearly."

"O daughter, dear, I did not hear
Your last remarks quite clearly;
But Billy is a clever lad
And no doubt loves you dearly.

"Remember well tomorrow morning
To be up quite early
To take a pleasant walk with him
Across the fields of barley."

THE BUGABOO
(Archive 978-A4)

Only one variant from Florida thus far. For additional American texts, see Henry, *FSSH*, p. 182; Combs, p. 214; Sharp, II, 174.

Recorded August 12, 1935, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida. She learned this song from her father, John Melton Moses Brantley James Madison Daniel Nathanael Moses Siquefield Lawrence R. Ross Hart, who had a large stock of erotic folksongs. She reports that her mother objected to her learning these songs, but her father taught them to her nevertheless. "This song," Mrs. Griffin commented, "isn't so bad; it's a good song; just the words ain't so nice. But if you want it, I'm going to give it to you anyhow. It's just about the bugaboo, and everybody knows about that."

All the harm I've ever done,
Was follow the richest trade;
All the harm I've ever done,
Was courting a pretty fair maid.

I courted her one summer through,
And part of the winter, too,
And often looked her in the face,
And thought of the bugaboo.

My love, she came to my bedside;
She bid me tears and woe;
My love, she came to my bedside;
She bid me tears and woe.

My love, she came to my bedside
She bid me tears and woe;
"Get in my bed on my bedside."
"I'm afraid of the bugaboo."

All through the first part of the night,
We lay in sport and game;
All through the middle part of the night,
Close in my arms she lay.

All through the latter part of the night
It's cry out, less undone;
"Get out of the bed, my pretty little miss,
I'm feared of the bugaboo."

So all through the first part of the year,
My love, she's growing round;
All through the middle part of the year,
She scarcely could set down.

All through the latter part of the year,
She brought me a very fine son;
So you can see as well as I,
What the bugaboo has done.

I WANT TO GO A-COURTING

(Archive 978-B1)

For additional versions of this bit of "cracker" realism, see Campbell and Sharp, pp. 9-10; Odum and Johnson, p. 192.

Recorded April 27, 1937, from the singing of Mrs. G. A. Griffin, of Newberry, Florida. When she was a girl about ten years of age, she learned this song from one of the daughters of Mr. W. A. Gordon, of Dooly County, Georgia.

I want to go a-courting and don't know where to go;
Went to the place way down yonder below,
Gals all mad and the old folks gone;
Children all a-crying and their heads not combed;
Children all a-crying and their heads not combed.

Had no house, and had no broom,
Old dirty clothes all a-hanging on a loom;
Had no house, and had no broom,
Old dirty clothes all a-hanging on a loom,
Old dirty clothes all a-hanging on a loom.

When they go to church, let me tell you how they dress:
The old black dress was the very best,
Old black sock and it greased all around,
Old leather bonnet with a hole in the crown,
Old leather bonnet with a hole in the crown.

Now when they go to cook let me tell you how they do:
Build up a fire as high as my head,
Shovel away the ashes, shovel away the coal,
Pouring down hoe cakes bran and all,
Pouring down hoe cakes bran and all.

When they called them in to dinner I thought it was to eat,
They called on me to carve the meat;
Had no knife and had no fork;
I sawed and sawed and couldn't make a mark;
I sawed and sawed and couldn't make a mark.

Sawed and sawed and it fell out of my plate,
Say, young man, I know a better way;
Sawed and sawed and it fell on the floor;
I give it a kick and sent it out of door;
I give it a kick and sent it out of door.

In came an old man and double barreled gun,
One says, "Young man, I think you better run."
But I stood and fought as brave as a bear;
I tangled up my hands in the old man's hair;
I tangled up my hands in the old man's hair.

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University of Florida

BOOK REVIEW

Palmetto Country: By Stetson Kennedy. American Folkways, edited by Erskine Caldwell. Duell, Sloan & Pearce. 1942. \$3.00.

As far as I am concerned, this book marks the coming of age of writing about Florida. Until recently it was virtually impossible to publish anything realistic about the state, made sensitive because it depends on misguided ballyhoo to attract tourists, without being labelled the equivalent of a saboteur in chamber of commerce language. After *Palmetto Country*, authors should feel free to write about Florida as any other place and can recognize that it has three dimensions — good, bad, and always interesting.

It is all the more astonishing that it took one of those extremely rare creatures — a native-born Florida author — to do the job. Stetson Kennedy, a sensitive young man from Jacksonville, who, with Zora Neale Hurston, are the two native Florida writers most worthy of talking about, deals with his birthplace in remarkably objective fashion.

Florida should pin a medal on him for showing that it is a place that lives and breathes instead of vainly trying to live up to travelogue superlatives. Mr. Kennedy gives the tourist-life short shrift, which it deserves, and tells you about the Florida that is not Miami nor the tourist-rim of the coasts. Which is to say he tells you about Florida and not the usually written-about part which is merely a winter suburb of the North.

His book contains by far the best collection of folklore ever gathered about the palmetto country, which also embraces southern Georgia and Alabama, where the lowly palmetto grows most profusely. It offers the rich juice of man and land in this territory, and Mr. Kennedy has missed little of either, which are here indeed dramatic, colorful, amusing and lustful.

The author pulls no punches, isn't afraid to present facts, whose impact is the more telling for simply being presented instead of preached about. He is perhaps a little too extensively concerned with underdog conditions among Negroes and Cubans. But at least these are often presented under headings of ironic humor, such as the section called "The Old Order Changeth, Somewhat."

If you want to know what Florida is really like, have some fun learning, and perhaps love the place even more afterward, this is your unrationed meat.

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